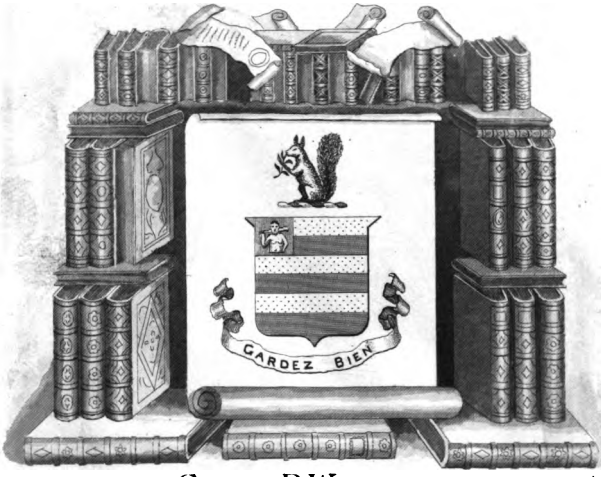

W. Perry 1804

THE JEWISH SPY:

BEING A

PHILOSOPHICAL, HISTORICAL,

AND

CRITICAL CORRESPONDENCE,

BY

LETTERS,

WHICH LATELY PASSED BETWEEN

CERTAIN JEWS

IN

TURKY, ITALY, FRANCE, &c.

Translated from the ORIGINALS into FRENCH,

By the MARQUIS D'ARGENS;
And now done into ENGLISH.

THE THIRD EDITION.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
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W. JOHNSTON, and A. SHUCKBURGH.

MDCCLXVI.

To his pretended MAJESTY

THEODORE I.

King of *CORSICA.*

SIRE,

WILL YOUR MAJESTY permit me to Present you with the Tranſlation of the Second Volume of *Lettres Juives!* I am aware that, conſidering the *Devil* of a Patron to whom I choſe to dedicate the Firſt Volume, you may perhaps think it

extraordinary that I ſhould preſume to prefix ſo auguſt a Name as Yours at the Head of this. But if you will pleaſe to recollect, SIRE, that, before your Arrival in *Corſica*, you were almoſt as obſcure as *Jemmy* ——— You will pardon my Boldneſs.

WHAT a Misfortune it is for the *Hebrew* Nation, that you did not take it into your Head to ſet up for King of *Jeruſalem!* Surely you could not have failed of as great Succeſs in ſuch an Undertaking, as in that which renders you Maſter of an Eſtate that lawfully belongs to the *Genoeſe*. What a Luſtre would it have given to the *Jews*, if you had but been pleaſed to have perſonated the *Meſſiah* whom they expect! And how happy would it have been for that People, to have had an Adventurer at their Head, ſo enterpriſing as you are! Perhaps you thought it would be a Taſk too difficult, and decline it for fear you ſhould not ſucceed; but you would have found conſiderable Supplies from the *Jews* of *Amſterdam*. I will venture, SIRE, to give you a Piece of wholeſome

Advice;

Advice: If you are driven out of *Corſica*, get yourſelf circumciſed, and carry a People who only wait for a Deliverer, to the Banks of *Jordan*: But if you would win the Hearts of the *Hebrews*, you muſt govern them more mildly than you do the *Corſicans*; for the *Iſraelites* do not love to be ſhot to death, and you will never obtain your Will of them by Severity.

In my Opinion you tread much in the Steps of thoſe who conquered the New World; *Ferdinando Cortes* treated the *Mexicans* juſt as you treat the *Corſicans*. Did you catch the Genius of that *Spaniſh* General in your Travels in *Spain*? Remember that he made Uſe of the Difference of Religion as a Cloak for his Cruelties. But the People with whom you bear the Sway, are of the Catholic and Apoſtolic Church of *Rome*. Perhaps you take the Duke of *Alva* for your Model; if ſo, Sire, you follow a bad one. He loſt half of the *Netherlands*, where his Barbarity contributed not a little to the Forming of the Republic of *Holland*.

BELIEVE me therefore, SIRE, your pretended Majesty had better take Pattern from a Number of Great Men, who with all their Valour and Courage were always ready to pardon. *Henry* IV. of *France*, to whom YOUR MAJESTY is no more a kin, than St. *Crispin* is to the GREAT GOD, conquered his Kingdom as much by Good-nature, as by Arms.

BY imitating that Hero, you would attract the Hearts of all Mankind. The Inhabitants of your new Empire will be fond of you, and Foreigners will flock to offer you their Service. The Count *de Bonneval* will quit the Turban to come and be General of your Forces: The Baron *de Pollnitz* will put on his little Band again to be your Chaplain: The Duke *de Ripperda* will abandon the Interest of the King of *Morocco* to be your Minister of State: And I can assure YOUR MAJESTY, that if a Breach between me and my Family had not been made up a few Days ago, I should have embraced the Post of your Chancellor with great Pleasure. But you will not want illustrious

illustrious Personages to fill that high Station, and I promise you that I will take care to inform my self what Persons may be deserving of the Employment, and to give YOUR MAJESTY a faithful Account.

I am, with a profound Respect,

SIRE,

Your pretended MAJESTY'S

Most humble, and

Most obedient Servant,

M. D.

PREFACE.

By *M. D.*

IN my Preface to the First *Volume I gave a general Answer to the Invectives thrown out against me, from the overflowing Zeal of certain Bigots, the fiery Advocates of every Person that wears a Cowl and Sandals. I promised them that I would spare the Monks hereafter, and have kept my Word with them, for in* this *Volume they are only mentioned occasionally.*

I have endeavoured that the Translation should be correct and concise, having taken more than ordinary Pains to render the Sense of my Author, and to give it the Air of an Original; in which too many Translations are very deficient.

But notwithstanding all that I have done to merit the Esteem and Approbation of the Public, the Bigots rave still, and cry out incessantly, We are really much obliged (*say they*) to this same Translator; he promised us to spare our Friends the Monks, and now he ridicules our dear Sisters the Nuns. Yet the one are as sacred as the other; and his Second Volume as richly deserves the Flames as the First. *What has quite exasperated them is the Jokes of* Jacob Brito *upon certain Bones and Rags, which by the Consecration of Avarice are termed Sacred Reliques. They would give all the Money they raise in one Year from their Pious Frauds, if they could but have their Ends of me. They publish every where that I am a Man of no Religion;*

gion; that none but an Enemy to the Deity would presume to translate the Lettres Juives; *and as an evident Proof of their Accusation, they alledge that I have made a Jest of St.* Christopher's *Chine-Bone, and the Prophet* Jeremiah's *Tooth. I might think it a sufficient Answer, that when a Work is translating, it should be rendered just as the Author composed it; and that the Translators of* Lucretius *were never prosecuted for the Opinions of that Philosopher. But I wave this Argument, and would have them to know, though they affirm I have no Religion, that the* Jews Letters *contain no more than what is said every Day by the* Launois, *the* Mabillons, *and other sensible Catholics; I will admit, in short, that there are some bold Strokes in them. Are such not to be pardoned in a* Jew?

I proceed to another Article of their Complaint, viz. *the severe Censures which are passed in the Letters upon the Court of* Rome. *To this I have but one Word to say: Let it be observed that* Aaron Monçeca, *as much a* Jew *as he is, scarce ever speaks of the sovereign Pontiff; but as a particular Prince and Master of* Rome. *It is even possible for a Writer to lash the Vices and Avarice of a corrupted Court; and yet be a good Catholic; of which this is a plain Proof. Pope* Pius II, *before he had a Thought of ever rising to the sovereign Pontificate, and assuming no other Stile as yet than* Æneas Silvius *the Poet, writes in the following Terms to his Friend* John Perigel; Nihil est, quod absque argento Romana Curia non dedat; nam & ipsæ manus Impositiones, & Spiritûs Sancti Dona venduntur; nec Peccatorum venia nisi Nummatis impenditur. Serva igitur Aurum, ut, cum opus sit, præsto requiras. * i. e. *There is nothing but what may be had at*

* Æneæ Sylvii, *seu* Pii II. *Opera*, p. 149.

the

the Court of Rome *for Money; the Laying on of Hands; the Gifts of the Holy Ghost; the Forgiveness of Sins; every Thing, in short, is sold at* Rome *dear enough. Save your Money therefore to serve you in a Time of Need.*

If there be any Thing said as bold as this in all the Lettres Juives, *I am ready to own that I was in the wrong to translate them: But if, on the contrary,* Aaron Monceca *has been much modester than* Pius II, *the Votaries must allow that he has said no more than what a staunch* Roman *Catholic may say, since I do not believe that they will presume to maintain that this Pope was not a Catholic. And if they could but get rid of the Prejudices that blind them, they would see that the Fundamentals of Religion have Nothing in common with the Vices of particular Persons, who abuse it, and cannot be sufficiently blamed. How happy would it be if it were possible to purge the Court of* Rome *thoroughly from Ambition and Avarice, by the mere Dint of Reproach!*

Before I conclude this Preface, I shall answer some other Objections. Aaron Monceca *is reproached for condemning all the* Jansenists *in the Lump, though there are among them very honest People. They who have started this Objection, have not duly examined this Work, or they would have seen that the* Jansenists *are distinguished into two Classes. Those of former Days, who are worthy of the Esteem of all good Men, such as the* Arnaulds, *the* Paschals, *and the* Sacis, *are commended in Twenty Places. The Fathers of the Oratory, who are Advocates for the Opinions of those great Men, have never been once mentioned in these Letters; thus when mention is made of the* Jansenists, *it must be understood of the Sect of* Convulsionaries, *Men known to be* fanatical, malignant, dangerous Knaves.

The

The Jesuits *are offended to find their Society represented as ambitious and formidable. But really would not they themselves laugh at any one that should say that they are humble, careful to avoid Honour, and not affected with the Riches and Splendor of this World? Has it not been confessed that their Behaviour is pure, that they are learned, civil, polite, and honest too, as private Men?* Aaron Monceca *would perhaps have said more, but he was afraid of telling a Lye.*

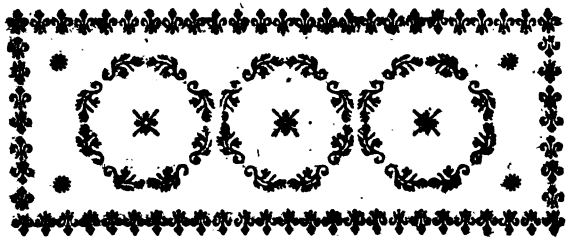
Some French *People, who never praise any Country but their own, have complained that* Aaron Monceca *has shewn as much Friendship and Partiality for the* Dutch, *as* Arouet de Voltaire *has for the* English. *This* Hebrew *knew the Merit and Virtues of that Nation; and he was too much of a Philosopher to restrain himself, and to disguise his Sentiments.*

Besides, if he had found the same Qualities among other People that he commended among the Dutch, *he would have applauded them in like manner. His Sincerity has made him find fault with the pernicious Maxims of the Converters. Happy are they who follow his Principles, which are so agreeable to the Law of Nature, that they need no Apology. The extravagant Rant of the furious Catholics has given him Cause, more than once, to commend the Mildness and Wisdom of the* Dutch *Government. It seems that he has an Affection for the* Nazarene *Protestants, and that his Friendship for them was created by their Loyalty to their Princes, and especially to* Henry IV. *his Hero, on whose Head they saved the Crown, when certain stupid Catholics endeavoured to dethrone him. I must add at the Close, that if the* Lettres Juives *are taxed with containing any Passages contrary to the Sentiments of the High-flying Catholics, those very Catholics will, however, be obliged to own, that it were to be wished that all People would think as he does,*

does, upon moral Precepts, and the Respect due Sovereigns.

For the rest, I shall, in the Translation of the t following Volumes, endeavour to merit that Fona the Public discovered for the First Volume, which had so quick a Vent as has exceeded my Expectati and defeated the Hopes of those, to whose Bigotry Currency of this Work is altogether repugnant.

THE



THE JEWISH SPY.

LETTER XLI.

From AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris, *to* ISAAC ONIS, *a Rabbi, at* Constantinople.

I WENT Yesterday to see the *Italian* Comedy, and was charmed with the unaffected, and at the same Time the just Action of the Performers. The Probability I perceived in it, made me the Fonder of it, because of it's Approach to Reality. Comedy being the Picture of human Life, the Comedian can only please by his Imitation of the Original which he copies: Let a Play be ever so good in itself, yet if it be performed by mean Actors, it droops; whereas on the contrary, a Piece that will not bear so much as to be read, often succeeds well in the Hands of good Comedians. This is the Case of most of the Pieces that are played upon the *Italian* Theatre: They have more of Shew than Substance, and the Representa-

tion of them is amusing, but the Reading insipid and uninforming.

Some Authors had invented a new Sort of Comedy, in which the Pleasantries of a Harlequin were accompanied with a grave Moral *. The *Italian* Scene in the Hands of these Authors, was in a fair Way to have become a worthy younger Sister of the *Latin* and the *French*. But some pitiful Writers † who came after them, have reduced it to be as bad as ever; for in almost all their Pieces the Regularity of conducting them, the Uniformity of Characters, the Prudence of Behaviour, are sacrificed to the Pleasure of raising a Laugh in the Pit by a Joke, or by some odd and improbable Incident.

The *Italian* Comedy has met with various Turns at *Paris*. In the last Reign it was quite banished out of *France*; for the Licentiousness with which it exposed Persons of the highest Rank to the Ridicule of the Lowest, subjected it to Proscription by the Authority of the Sovereign. But some Years after, the Duke Regent recalled it from Banishment, and brought it again to *Paris*. The Punishment of the old Comedians rendered the new ones more cautious, so that they omitted what might be offensive to private Persons, at the same Time that they left enough of the Agreeable in their Plays to amuse the Public; for they found in the *French* Comedians dangerous Rivals, whose real Merit would have eclipsed the Tinsel

* This one sees with Pleasure in the Pieces, intitled, *La Double Inconstance*, *La Surprise de l'Amour*, &c. by MARIVAUX. *Timon le Misantrope*, *Arlequin Sauvage*, &c. by DE LILLE, who died some Years ago at *Paris*, and not the Physicians at the *Hague*, as some have absurdly advanced.

† ROMAGNESI, LELIO the Son, and others.

of

of their Theatre, if they had not made amends for it's Deficiency by the Goodness of their Performance.

The *French* Comedies and Tragedies are the Rivals of the *Greek*; and if the modern Plays do not exceed the antient ones, yet there is no Man of Learning who is unprejudiced, that will dispute their being equal to them; and for my own Part I should in many Cases be tempted to allow them the Superiority.

There is not a Comic Writer among the *Latins*, that has united so many Talents together as *Moliere* has done. *Terence* wrote in a pure Stile: His Characters are perfectly natural: He does not barely relate Things, but actually places them in your View; and his Plays are throughout judiciously conducted. But he wanted Fire, Imagination, and a Variety in Characters; so that if of the six Plays which we have of his five had been lost, we should still have *Terence* intire. In all his Comedies we find a knavish Footman, a debauched or amorous young Fellow, a covetous Father, *&c.* and after a Person has read his *Andria*, he meets with no new Instruction in his other Plays, nor any Thing to amuse the Mind, but Fiction.

Plautus though he did not want for Wit, nor for Variety, especially in his Characters, which abound with it, is often deficient in Stile; and in his best Plays he is sometimes guilty of mean Expressions, unworthy of a good Taste.

But where do we find more Variety, more Dignity, more Exactness in Characters, more Accuracy and Perspicuity in Stile, than in the *Misantrope*, the *Femmes Savants*, the *Tartuffe*, the *Facheux*, the *Ecole des Femmes*, and that of *Des Maris?* I should be apt to prefer *Moliere*'s good Plays to those of the *Greek* Poets; and to think even the *Italian* Farces

better than the bad ones, which he wrote to please the Taste of the Vulgar, because though they are equally faulty, yet the *Italian* Farces are more shewy.

The *French* have, to my thinking, carried their Tragedy to a greater Pitch of Perfection. The *Romans* never had any Thing of this Kind that could deserve the Attention of nice Judges. The Tragedies of *Seneca* are the Productions of a Declaimer, rather than the Works of a Tragic Author: He neither has enough of the Sublime to ravish my Soul, nor enough of the Tender and Pathetic to melt me. All the Sentences with which his Writings abound, are not capable of affecting me; and he does not inspire me either with Terror, Fear, or Pity.

The *Romans* very much extolled the *Thyestes* of *Varius*, and the *Medea* of *Ovid*. It is Pity that Time has not preserved those two Pieces, for I do not Question but they were very beautiful, since *Ovid* perfectly knew the Passions, and no body had so lively a Way of expressing the Sentiments of a raving Lover. His *Heroines* are sure Vouchers to us of the Beauties of his Tragedy; but the Goodness of a Work which is in being, is not to be estimated by the Reputation of another not certainly known.

Sophocles and *Euripides* raised the Theatre among the *Greeks* as high as possible. *Corneille* and *Racine* improved it to Perfection among the *French*; and in order to judge of the Preference between those Authors, it is my Opinion that it must be determined by that which ought to be given to the Taste of the *Athenians* and the *Parisians*. There are few *Frenchmen* now-a-days, except certain Idolizers of Antiquity, that will allow the *Greek* Theatre to be superior to theirs. It is true, this Opinion is not so generally received in the foreign Nations; yet it has a good many Adherents.

I dare

I dare maintain that there is more Grandeur, Dignity, and Majesty in *Corneille* than in *Sophocles*; for the latter, though endowed with a sublime Genius, and worthy of the Admiration of all good Judges, had not that Variety in the different Characters, nor that Energy and Truth in his Portraitures.

Racine, to the Tender and Pathetic of *Euripides*, often joined the Grand and the Sublime of *Sophocles* and *Corneille*; and perhaps the only Fault of his Works was, that they were too perfect; for so many Beauties continually succeeding each other, are the Reason why some Passages do not strike the Imagination so much as they would have done, had there been Faults to set them off.

Two modern Poets have succeeded to the Glory of those great Men; indeed they have not equalled them, but they have perfectly copied after them, and that so nicely, that they seem to be Originals. The one * affects the Mind and the Heart alternately with Love, Pity, and Terror; the other † an excellent Versifier, a bold Genius, and a Man of vast Capacity, has chalked out a new Method to himself. He has embellished the Theatre with Plays, which as they seemed new and extraordinary, ran the Hazard of being condemned; and has just published a Tragedy of three Acts, in which Piece there is not one Female Character; so that Love is entirely banished out of it. Now the Want of this Passion, which is the Life of the Theatre, and let certain Critics say what they will, the surest Means of reaching to the Heart, has forced the Author to reduce his Work to three Acts. He was sensible that all the Policy, all the Grandeur of *Rome* would be insufficient to carry him on to

* *Crebillon.* † *Voltaire.*

a fifth Act, without falling into cold Declamations, which take away the Spirit of Action. There is no modern Piece in which Love has not some little Share, or enough to introduce at least a Woman to help to conduct the Action to it's End, and to keep it from the cold Assistance of Narrations and Episodes.

As to the ancient Tragedies, in which Number we may reckon *Racine's Athalia* and *Esther*, the Chorusses make great amends for the Brevity of the Acts. If certain Pieces of *Euripides* and *Sophocles* were to be represented without the Chorusses, they would scarce hold half an Hour. Thus the Music, Singing, and the Interludes, spun out the Time to the Length of the modern Tragedies.

That new Piece which I mentioned to thee, is intitled, *The Death of* Julius Cæsar: The Character of that Emperor is conformable to the Idea which has been transmitted of him to us by Antiquity. He is ambitious, eloquent, intrepid, friendly, and generous: The Author describes him to the Life in five Verses; and the Picture which he draws of him is the more ingenious, because he has been so happy as to make *Cæsar* himself give it from his own Mouth, speaking to *Anthony*, when he pressed him to punish certain Senators that might be capable of shortening his Days.

Je les aurois punis, si je les pouvois craindre:
Et me conseille point de me faire haïr.
Je sçai combattre, vaincre, & ne sçai point punir.
Allons: & n'écoutant ni soupçons, ni vengeance.
Sur l'Univers soumis régnons sans violence.

Punish I surely would, did I but fear them;
Counsel me not how to get Hatred.

I know

I know not what it is to fight and conquer, but
know not how to punish.
Then let's be deaf to Jealousy and Revenge,
And rule th' obedient Universe without Violence.

This Character is the more beautiful, and gives the more Pleasure, because it seems natural, and taken from the Life, for it is *Cæsar* that draws his own Picture in discovering his most secret Sentiments to his Confidant. These are happy Plans. A Character which conducts the Action to the End, has much more Effect than a cold Description of the Qualities or Vices of any one Person by another.

Racine has succeeded, however, in that which the Vizier *Achmet* gives of the Sultan *Ibrahim*: It's Brevity, it's Justness, and the Situation of the Person who gives it, have rendered this Passage a complete Piece.

L'imbecille Ibrahim, sans craindre sa Naissance,
Traine exemt de Péril une éternelle Enfance,
Indigne également, de Vivre, & de Mourir,
On l'abandonné aux Mains qui daignent le nourir *.
The Ideot *Ibrahim*, regardless of his Birth,
Is always in a State of Childhood free from Peril.
Being of Life and Death alike unworthy,
He is abandoned to those Hands that deign to feed him,

I had rather have been the Author of these four Verses, than all *Seneca*'s Tragedies. I do not believe it is possible to equal the Perspicuity and Exactness with which he has described the Tranquility wherein the Brother of a Sultan lived at the Seraglio. But every Body has not succeeded so well as *Racine*. Therefore it is my Opinion that Tragedy

* *Racine, Bajazet*, Scene I.

absolutely requires that the Persons who are introduced, should draw their own Pictures as much as it is possible in the Nature of the Thing; for then the Characters are more striking, and remain with deeper Impression upon the Imagination: And when this is not possible, Care must be taken to characterize the Person spoken of in a concise Manner, not like an Orator, or a Declaimer.

Brutus, *Cassius*, *Cimber*, and the other Senators who conspired against *Cæsar*, are characterized with too much Uniformity in the Scene of that Piece, where they are speaking to *Julius Cæsar*. Methinks I see a Rabble of Deputies from a Country Village, haranguing a Governor of a Province, on the Impossibility of paying their Taxes, and every one speaking a short Sentence in his Turn, all to the same Purpose, *We have no Money*. Consequently the *Roman* Senators will have no King.

The Character of *Anthony* is beautiful. He is drawn such as he ought to be, a zealous Friend of *Cæsar*, an Enemy to Liberty, incapable of serving under any other than so great a Master. See how he describes himself speaking to *Julius Cæsar*.

Antoine, tu le sçais, ne connoit point l'Envie,
J'ai chéri, plus que toi, la Gloire de ta vie.
J'ai préparé la Chaine où tu mets les Romains,
Content d'être sous toi le plus grand des Humains.
Plus fier de t'attacher ce nouveau Diademe,
Plus grand de te servir, que de régner moi-même.

Anthony, thou knowest, knows not Envy;
I have been more tender of thy Honour, than thou thyself.
'Twas I prepar'd thy Chain to bind the *Romans*;
Content to be the greatest Man next to thyself.

More

More proud of crowning thee with this new Diadem;
More great to be thy Subject, than a Monarch.

The last Scene of this Tragedy is a magnificent Piece. The Majesty of the Sentiments, and the Loftiness of the Expressions are the more suitable to it, because though *Anthony* could not but be troubled in his Mind, he harangues the People in order to seduce them, and to animate them against the Murderers of *Cæsar*. Thus, affected Expressions which are disgusting from a Man overwhelmed with Grief, and which are condemned in the Rehearsal of *Theramenes*, are proper here, and produce a good Effect in the Minds of the Spectators.

Fare thee well, dear *Isaac*, and may God grant thee Riches in Abundance.

LETTER XLII.

From AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris, *to* ISAAC ONIS, *a Rabbi, at* Constantinople.

YESTERDAY a Friend of mine carried me to a Convent of the *Nazarene* Fryars, where I spent Part of the Day, and enquired diligently into their Behaviour, and monastic Way of Life. I said to the Fryar, into whose Chamber my Friend carried me, *What is it you amuse yourselves with in this Retirement? I pray to God*, said he, *that I may be soon the Procurator or Guardian, in order to have the Pleasure sometimes of going out of it. In the mean Time I drink, eat, sleep, and sing in the Choir.* This, said,

said I, *cannot be enough to employ you all the Day.* have no other Business, *replied he*, and for t Years that I have been a Monk, I do not remer ber that I have done any Thing else. During o Conversation I heard a little Bell ring: Now, *s be*, it is half an Hour past four o'Clock; with yo Leave, I will quit you for a Moment, for my Du calls me to the Refectory. My Friend, who h been used for a long Time to banter him, ask him, Why he did not stay for the second Tabl in order to go to Supper? I will lay a Wager, *co tinued he*, that you have a double Mess. You a right, *replied the Monk*, we live to Day at th Expence of a rich Farmer of the Revenue, wh regularly gives an Entertainment once a Week t the whole Convent. This Benefactor is the Peni tent of the Reverend Father Guardian. He doe Things to Perfection. Your Father Guardian, *re plied my Friend*, had better enjoin him to provid less good Cheer for you, and to rob the Public less for Monsieur *D**** passes for a very great Knave As our Conversation was not very pleasing to th Monk, who stood upon Thorns all the Time, fo fear that his Mess would be diminished, he mad us a profound Bow, went away for half an Hour and then came again to us with an Air of Gaiety and Satisfaction. Our Brother *Maurice*, *says he*, has outdone himself To-day: He had procured some Veal that was wonderfully good, and the Convent will sustain a considerable Loss whenever he leaves it. I would with all my Heart give the first ten Crowns which I shall pocket when I am Procurator of the Convent, that he were but ten Years younger. You will hardly fare so well To-morrow, *said I*. Pardon me, *said he*, we are to dine To-morrow upon the Charity of a rich Widow, which is dispensed to us twice every Month: She has

has already sent in Abundance of good Cheer. You are very happy, said I, to live so much at your Ease: You have Lodging and Food, without being obliged to take Care for it: You get enough by singing for half an Hour, to subsist you for a Fortnight.

Ah! replied the Fryar, you know but little of the Monastic Life, and the sad State of those who embrace it, which is more melancholy and tiresome, than the Fate of a Slave in *Turky*; for his Servitude does not hinder him from getting Money, and then he has the Hopes that some Day or other it will be at an End, but a Monk is doomed for ever to a Captivity, which is the more cruel, because he is under the Command of Masters that are more barbarous than the severest Captains of *Marocco* and *Sallee*. Is any Thing so hard as to be a Slave to the Will and Pleasure of a Man, who being himself uneasy with his own Condition, revenges himself upon others for his miserable Situation, and makes them answerable for his Misfortunes? You give me, said I, Father, a very strange Account of your Fate; so that I wonder to see so many People turn Fryars every Day, and to find the Convents so well stocked. Error and Youth, said he, are the Source and Nursery of the Monks. A young Novice may be compared to a Child, who at fourteen or fifteen Years of Age has a Vow imposed upon him, to be tormented in his Convent by all the Passions of this World. His wearing an odd Habit, his having his Head shaved, and his Feet bare, makes him nevertheless a Man. In Spite of the Monkish Education, and the Prejudices which are imbibed in the Cloister, Reason sooner or later speaks out clearly, and breaks through the Clouds which obscured it; so that at thirty Years of Age we reflect

on the Folly committed at fifteen; but the Impossibility of repairing it is attended with such Anguish as turns afterwards into Hypocrisy and Debauchery. Man, born for Liberty, cannot always be a Slave, but sooner or later endeavours to throw off so harsh a Captivity. You are not near so happy, said I to the Fryar, as I imagined: I plainly see that your Condition is only tranquil in Appearance. If you knew it thoroughly, replied he, you would find it a State full of Anxiety: It is true that our Life is an entire Series of Clownishness and Sluggishness, and so tranquil, that a brute Beast could relish it. If we could cease to be Men, and to have Passions, Nothing certainly is so commodious as to eat, drink, and sleep. For as to the pretended Austerities of which we make a Shew to the World, these are Things to which we are easily accustomed: Habit inures us to bear our Feet as naked as the Face and Hands: The Want of Linen is a Thing which is not minded, when a Man has been a Week without it; and there is not a Fryar but is as easy in his Habit, after he has been three Months admitted, as a Beau in his laced Cloaths. But it is impossible ever to be reconciled to that servile Obedience, which ranks us in the Class of Beasts, at the same Time that it leaves us the Passions and Sentiments of Men; which forbids us even the Liberty of Thinking, and which renders it criminal for us to have a Glimpse of that Reason which offers to give us Light.

This Fryar was going on to give me a farther Account of his Situation, when I heard the same Bell ring which had before called him to the Refectory. Now, said he, it is Time for me to return to my Cell, and the Hour is come for my going to Bed. As fond as I am of sitting up and enjoying your good Company, I am forced to leave you:

you: The Guardian in half an Hour's Time will go to the Chambers to see that all are a-bed; and as he has owed me a Grudge for a long Time, would be very glad to find a Pretence to abridge me of my Mess for a whole Week. The Fryar had this so much at Heart, that without staying for any Answer, he kissed his Habit and left us.

Of all the Whimsies of the *Nazarenes*, Nothing appears to me so ridiculous as this vast Swarm of People, who are tormented in their Solitude, and a Burthen to those without Doors. That State of Life which is least useful to Society, is the most contemptible of all; but that which is pernicious and noxious to Society, must be held in Abhorrence by Men of Sense. Where is the Policy of *France* to keep near an hundred thousand Drones, that are of no Manner of Service to the Arts and Sciences, and the Preservation of the Kingdom?

The superstitious *Nazarenes* pretend that there should be an Order of Men in all Countries, to pray perpetually for those that cannot do it themselves. They set an infinite Value upon Monastical Psalmody, and think the Safety of the State depends upon it: Ignorant Wretches! who do not know that the best Song that can be addressed to God, consists in the Purity of the Heart. They might easily cure themselves of their Prejudices, if they were to cast their Eyes into certain *Nazarene* Countries, from whence the Monks have been entirely banished: They would there see that the Deity is so far from being offended at the Banishment and Proscription of those Drones, that he has blessed those Kingdoms with Wealth and Plenty. Consider, dear *Isaac*, how many Children all these Monks would have, if one was a Shoemaker, another a Taylor, another a Baker, &c. Now the same Arret that suppressed the Monasteries

nasteries, would also break open the Prisons of Numbers of young Women; and in fifteen Years' Time the Kingdom would be more populous by one Third. The *French* who make Use of their Reason, know the Abuse of Convents and Monasteries, but they have a Veneration for it as an Error of Antiquity, consecrated under the Veil of Religion, kept up by the Superstitious, and protected by the sovereign Pontiff. The several Monastic Orders are as so many different Regiments under his Command, which keep Garrison in the *Nazarene* Countries that are of his Faith. By the Assistance of these Forces, which have their several Liveries, their Colonels, their Captains, and even their Colours or Banners, he has often shook the Thrones of the most powerful Monarches, and stabbed them to the Heart in the Midst of their Courts and Armies.

The *English* and *Dutch* could never totally proscribe or banish the Monks from their Countries, but they have forbid them to appear there in their Military Habits, so that they dress there like other Men. But in the Toleration which they grant to the Soldiers of the sovereign Pontiff, they have excepted the * Grenadiers, who are bold resolute People, and ready to undertake any Thing for the Accomplishment of their Designs. These look on the other Monks with Contempt, and pretend not to be of their Class. Nevertheless, they are not merely Ecclesiastics, and their Establishment and Politics are equally difficult to define and discover. They are as learned, as the other Fryars are ignorant; feeble Friends, but implacable Enemies; severe in their Manners, and very regular in their Ways of Living, whatever their Adversaries say of them; but relax as to other Points, and com-

* The Jesuits.

plaisant

plaisant even to excess. Their Morality is a Consequence of their Policy, as their reserved Conduct is of that good Order and Rule which are injoined by their principal Leaders. As private Men they are engaging, good-natured, and unaffected; but in the generality as a Body, they are haughty, dangerous, crafty Impostors, and ambitious beyond Expression. They are not terrified at Dangers; they travel every Day to the remotest Countries to make Incursions, and to plant the *Nazarene* Standard there. They are an unshaken Bulwark to the the sovereign Pontiff; so that when he is under a Necessity of undertaking any *Coup d'Eclat*, he always applies to them. For this Reason they are often suspected to be the Authors of a great many Things in which they have no Share. They are of great Use to the Society, by the Care they take of the Education of the Youth, which is commonly committed to them. They pass for great Enemies to the Fair Sex, in which they differ intirely from certain Fryars *, who are deemed the Heroes of Monastic Gallantry. It is not many Days ago, that one of these was unfortunately surprised with a Fair Penitent of his, whom he had introduced into his Convent in Man's Apparel. The Affair made a good deal of Noise at first, but the Monks endeavoured to hush it up, and in Public denied the Truth of the Fact.

The *Frenchman* who told me the Story, said, by Way of Banter, That it would be of Service to the State, if the Monks played these Pranks oftener; *They would make* France *populous*, said he, *and would be no longer such a Charge upon the Public. God forbid*, said another *Frenchman, that the Race of so pernicious a Breed should ever multiply: We should then see Monsters to the third Generation: The Father a Drone; the Son a Rascal; and guess what*

* The Cordeliers.

would

would be the Grandson. By this thou mayest judge what Opinion some of the *Nazarenes* have of their Fryars.

Fare thee well, dear *Isaac*, and live content, with a full Measure of Happiness.

LETTER XLIII.

From AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris, *to* ISAAC ONIS, *a Rabbi, at* Constantinople.

SOME Time ago, dear *Isaac*, I gave thee my Opinion concerning the Notion that all People are damned, who have not the good Fortune to be born within the Pale of *Israel* *. I confessed to thee that I could not believe that an infinite Number of good People, who have in their Religion conformed to their Precepts of the soundest Morality, who have obeyed the internal Legislator, that is to say, the Dictates of their Conscience, and the Impressions of natural Reason, could be damned. I founded my Opinion on the Goodness and Justice of God, to the very Essence of which Attributes the everlasting Misery of innocent Creatures is directly contrary. I frankly declare to thee, that upon this Goodness, and this same Justice, I would gladly establish a second Principle, *viz.* that the Pains of the Damned will not be eternal; and that after a certain Number of Ages, the Souls condemned to the Torments of the Damned, will be cleansed and purified from their Stains, by the Pains which they have endured.

* Letter XXXVI.

How

How can it be conceived that God should condemn Millions of Creatures to everlasting Misery? For by admitting that Man, who had the Free-Will of committing Good or Evil, has given Occasion to the Deity to punish him eternally, and that Justice being a Quality as essential to the Supreme Being as Goodness, the everlasting Punishment of the Damned were a just Punishment, it does not clear up the Difficulty in Question, because God having it at his Option to purge Men from their Transgressions by temporary Pains, it is to be presupposed that he ought to choose the latter. The Notion which I have of Clemency (a Notion which I could not be mistaken in entertaining, because it is conformable to the Light of Nature, and comes to me from God) evidently convincing me that it is unjust, when it is possible to put an End to the Torments of an unhappy Person, to prolong them eternally without a lawful Cause. Now there is none at all for the rendering Damnation eternal. I would fain ask the *Jewish*, *Nazarene*, and *Mahometan* Doctors, who are alike positive in the Point of the eternal Misery of Creatures, whether God could not, if he thought fit, order it so that the Pains which Souls suffer after the Destruction of the Body, should render them pure and worthy to come into his Presence. There is no Divine, I believe, of any Religion whatsoever, that will dare to make answer, that the Almighty cannot blot out the Stains of a Soul, be they ever so deep. Let such a one, be who or what he will, he must be deemed either an Atheist, who sets Limits to the Power of the Deity, and who by Consequence would gladly annihilate it; or an Idiot, who has not the least Notion either of sound Philosophy, or even of the general Ideas of Order. Now putting the Case that the Punishment which a Man suffers, though ever so much

much deſerved, does not render him a Jot the more virtuous; and that at the ſame Time it is in the Power of another to inflict leſſer Penance upon him, which ſhall reſtore him to his Innocence, and give him a Hatred of Vice; I would know of the Divines, what ought to be done in ſuch a Caſe, and what would be the Dictate of Clemency? Every Man in his Senſes cannot help confeſſing, that the latter Method ought to be preferred. Now ſince it is in the Power of God to put an End to the Pains of the Damned, and ſince he can render thoſe Pains uſeful and advantageous to them, why ſhould any body think that he renders them everlaſting and unvailable, and that he ſhould do Ill, when it is in his Power to do Good? Is it not an Abſurdity to maintain and believe, that ſovereign Juſtice can be for Injuſtice?

But, ſome will ſay, *you judge of the Attributes of the infinite Being, by thoſe of finite Creatures. You are for diving to the very Bottom of God's Clemency, and can have no Idea of it.* This Objection is falſe, and is the very Baſis and Foundation of all the Abſurdities of the Schools. For I grant that I can have no intire and perfect Idea of the celeſtial Clemency. But the Notion I have of it is not a wrong and fallacious one, becauſe it is agreeable to Reaſon, which being the only Light that the Divinity has granted for my Conduct, cannot miſlead me. If Things which paſs with Men for the moſt juſt and equitable, are unjuſt in the Sight of God, there is an End of all Certainty, and all is Confuſion. What will be deemed Virtue, may be Vice; we ſhall entertain no Notion ſuitable to the Attributes of the Supreme Being, and it muſt be ſaid that we have no Idea of him conſiſtent with thoſe which we are furniſhed with by the Light of Nature. For as ſoon as it is granted that the ſame Notions which I entertain

tertain of Goodness and Clemency, may be ascribed to the Goodness and Clemency of Heaven, I shall from thence therefore plainly conclude, that Nothing whatsoever, repugnant to those Ideas, can have Existence in the Attributes of God. Now I am clearly convinced, that it is contrary to the invisible Wisdom to inflict everlasting and unavailable Punishments, when they may be rendered short and useful. Surely therefore, God, in whose Power it was to render the Torments of the Damned useful and temporary, could not choose to render them everlasting and useless, because God, being sovereignly Wise, always acts conformably to Wisdom.

Our sacred Books assure us, dear *Isaac*, in several Places, that God will not always chide, nor will he keep his Anger for ever*. Why therefore should Cruelty be ascribed to him, which is a Principle directly contrary to his Essence? If any Expressions in Scripture seem to favour the Notion of everlasting Damnation, it is where a Meaning is put upon them which they do not carry, and where they are not interpreted as they ought. Into what Absurdities should we not fall, were we to explain all the Passages of the Bible literally?

The *Nazarene* Doctors, who establish their Opinion of everlasting Punishment upon the precise Terms of their sacred Books, have no better Foundation for it than our Rabbies have; for they own that sometimes the literal Sense of certain Expressions must not be adhered to. Why then do not they interpret those Words of *everlasting Fire*, and *endless Torments*, in such a Manner as does not hurt the Idea we have of the Divine Mercy? To this they answer, That the Justice of God is an Attribute

* See Psal. ciii. Isaah lvii. Micah vii.

which

which is as essential to his Being as his Mercy, and that his Justice demands the Punishment of Faults. But this Answer is another Evasion: For as his Justice is capable of being satisfied by a temporary Punishment, it ought not to demand an everlasting one. And the Question again recurs to this Point, *viz.* Whether it was not in the Power of God, that the most enormous Sins should be expiated by temporary Torments? Undoubtedly he that is Almighty had it in his Power; and therefore he has so ordered it, because he always does what is best, most charitable, most mild, most merciful; and because it is more agreeable to Clemency and Mercy, to inflict temporary Punishments, than such as never should have an End.

There is a Difficulty that occurs to the Mind in favour of the rigid Divines, *viz.* the future State of the Devils: If the Pains of the Damned are transitory, it will follow that those of the Devils must be so too. This seems at first Sight contrary to our most familiar Ideas. But when we consider the Matter attentively, and lay aside all Prejudice, the Delusion soon vanishes; and there is Nothing impossible, or even contrary to Reason, in the Supposition that there will be an End even to the Torments of the Devils. Besides, we do not know the Nature of those Spirits; we are not sure that they do all that Mischief to Mankind which is pretended. Who knows too, whether they are not forced to do it, and whether God does not make Use of them as his Instruments to punish Vice? In such Case the Evil which they commit ought not to be charged upon them as Crimes, since the Angels themselves have sometimes been the Ministers of the Wrath of Heaven. A Devil, who acts by the Order of the Deity, is no more criminal than the destroying Angel, and therefore is only punishable for his first Offence.

Where

Where is the Impossibility but God may one Day forgive him for it, and that it may be effaced by Punishment and Repentance? A Man would be very silly to affirm upon the Faith of the Stories, which are related by the *Nazarene* Monks in the History of their Exorcisms, that the Devils blaspheme the Divinity. It is to be presupposed that they act very differently, as well as the Damned, and that both the one and the other being Spirits disengaged from the Shackles of the Body, and sheltered from the Delusions of the Senses, they know that the Wrath of God, how great soever, may be turned by Repentance; and undoubtedly they are the better for this Knowledge. That Rage they are said to be possessed with in the Books of the *Nazarenes*, is an Anguish of Mind that torments the Damned from a hearty Sorrow that they have displeased the Divinity: And this Sorrow is a Homage they pay to him, which serves as a Preparation for their future State, purges their Faults, cleanses their Stains, and, after some Time of Suffering, renders them worthy of the Mercy of God.

The State of Purgatory, which many religious Sects have adopted as a Truth, is an evident Proof of the Opinion of it's Professors, that by Sufferings a guilty Soul may be made fit to behold it's Creator. It is true that the *Nazarene* Papists have published so many Absurdities on this Article of a Place of Atonement, that their Adversaries have had Reason to treat all their Stories as Impostures, invented for no other End than to satisfy the Avarice of the Priests: But if they had barely contented themselves with admitting of a Place to which all Souls in general were to descend after Death, there to remain till they were purified, their Opinion would, I think, have been very rational; *1st*, Because the Opinion which does

does not admit of everlasting Punishment, seems to me to be perfectly agreeable to the Ideas which the Light of Nature conveys to me of the Clemency of God: 2*dly*, Because if we distinguish the Souls in the Life to come into two Classes only, it is as much as to say that all Souls when they go out of the Body, are either perfectly pure, or all over defiled. Nevertheless it is visible, that this is evidently false. The Mercy of God therefore requires that, in Order to favour the Happiness of Souls, there should be some Method to cleanse those who had been more addicted to Evil than Good. Now, by admitting one general Residence for all, in which they might be purged of their Crimes, it abolishes the Purgatory of the Papists, a middle State betweem Hell and Heaven, invented by the Craft of the Monks; and the Inconveniences are obviated, which appear in the System of those who only admit of two Classes in the Life to come.

The Doctors who maintain the Eternity of Torments objects, that the Opinion that they will have an End, inclines Men to be loose, and authorizes Crimes by giving Encouragement to those who commit them. *Do but once persuade the People*, say they, *that the greatest Offences will be one Day pardoned, and you set open the Bar to Licentiousness of Manners, to Dishonesty, to Murder, Massacre*, &c. 'Since our Torments, the Wicked will think, are 'not to last for ever, let us balance the Pleasures 'we shall have a Taste of upon Earth, with the 'transitory Torments we are to suffer in the other 'World; which, be they ever so severe, ought 'not to frighten us, since we are sure that they will 'end in a happy Eternity.' The Difference, *continue the Divines*, between the Virtuous and the Wicked is so small, that it can scarce make any Impression

preſſion upon the latter; for ſuppoſing thirty thouſand Years of Pains and Torments, what is it to immenſe Eternity? A Drop of Water compared to the Ocean, gives but a faint Idea of that unhappy Period, compared to happy Eternity.

It is certain, dear *Iſaac*, that there is a Plauſibility in theſe Arguments, yet when they are ſcanned thoroughly, they loſe a vaſt deal of their Weight; and it is viſible that they have more of the Specious than the Solid. The more conformable the threatened Puniſhment is to the Ideas of Mankind, the more Impreſſion it makes upon their Minds. Now it is very certain, that there being ſomething in everlaſting Torments, not only contrary to the Goodneſs of God, but even to the Notions of the meaneſt of Mankind, moſt of the Rakes, Debauchees, and Wits of the World, totally reject the Belief of a Hell, becauſe they ſee no Proportion between temporary Faults and eternal Puniſhments. As Religion does not furniſh a juſt middle Opinion to ſhew a Connection between the two former, they run into an Extreme, and not only diſbelieve mortal Puniſhments, but even momentary ones. Every Day's Experience demonſtrates this Truth ſo clearly, that all the philoſophical Diſcourſes in the World cannot defeat it. Do not we ſee a vaſt Number of ſtupid People, whoſe Contempt of Hell is not owing to their Study, exceſſively indifferent about it for no other Reaſon but their faint Opinion of it's Exiſtence?

It is a Miſtake to think that Men who are perſuaded of the Reality of certain Pains, which, though they are extremely ſevere and cruel, are to have an End, will not endeavour to eſcape them. For, as they are convinced of the Reality of ſuch Pains, and as it carries Nothing in it contrary to their own Notions,

Notions, they are struck with it to the last Degree. One need only consider how many Alms the *Nazarenes* of the several Sects have given to their Priests, and how many Fasts, Pilgrimages, *&c.* they observe, to be fully convinced of what Effect the Notion of temporary Punishment has upon the Minds of the greatest Criminals. We need only cast our Eyes on what passes at *Rome* during the Jubilee. There are few of the Banditti or Robbers of *Italy*, but are for gaining Indulgences for two or three thousand Years: They do not think of avoiding Hell, but all they care for is to shorten the Time of their future Residence in Purgatory.

I conclude my Letter, dear *Isaac*, with this Reflexion: All Mankind will necessarily agree in admitting the Opinion of such Punishments as are conformable to all Mens' Notions; by Consequence their Fear will tend to the Good of Society. The Ungodly, the Libertines, and the Wits will have no Argument to combate a Belief that is founded upon the Ideas of the Light of Nature: They will not dare to flatter themselves with the Impunity of their Crimes on any Pretence whatsoever: They can then no longer say, *The Punishments wi h which you threaten us, are inconsistent with the Goodness of God: We do not comprehend that a Fault, be it ever so great, can never be expiated: The Hell of which you assure us the Existence, is repugnant to our Notions.* When they are fully possessed of the Truth of an Opinion consistent with the Ideas of Order, they will be sensible that their Crimes will be severely chastized, and that their Punishments will be proportionable to their Faults. Then, in order to avoid this temporary Hell, they will do every Thing that the *Greek* and *Roman Nazarenes* do to free themselves from Purgatory; and when

when they really believe it's Existence, they will be the more struck with it.

Fare thee well, my dear *Isaac*; endeavour to live content and happy; and let me hear from thee.

LETTER XIV.

From ISAAC ONIS, *a Rabbi, at* Constantinople, *to* AARON MONCECA *at* Paris.

I Have been so much employed, that I have not been able to answer thy Letters sooner. A considerable Number of us Rabbies and * Caraites have had a Meeting, to try if we could bring about an Union of our Opinions; but after having disputed to no Purpose, we separated.

I confess to thee, dear *Manceca*, that, for my own Part, I have been almost convinced by those Conferences, that the Caraites have a good Cause; I did what I could to prevail with my Brethren to give up certain Opinions, but they rigidly pleaded for the Validity and Truth of the Talmud. I could not help blushing when the Caraites asked us, *If we could in Reason oblige them to believe, that God is forced to roar like a Lion three Times in a Night; the first Time when the Ass brays, the second when the Dogs bark, and the third Time when the Infant sucks at the*

* *Caraites*, a Sect of Modern Jews, in Opposition to the Rabbinical Class, or those who admit the Talmud of the Rabbies. The Term *Carai* signifies, *a Man of consummate Knowledge in the Holy Scriptures*; for which Reason they whose Faith is only founded on the Bible are called *Caraites*.

Breast, and when the Woman talks to her Husband? God then says, Wo be to me, because I have destroyed my House, burnt my Temple, and made my Children Captives *. 'This, said the Caraites, is a Sample 'of that Confession of Faith, which you want us to 'sign, by adopting the ridiculous Errors of the 'Talmud. But we find that they who have such 'Notions of God, can neither serve nor worship 'him. What Honour does a Being deserve, that is 'liable to all Kinds of Folly, obliged to bray and to 'be in a Rage, subject to all the Passions, to Hatred, 'Despair, and Repentance, and so short-sighted as 'not to have foreseen that by abandoning his People, 'he would be guilty of a Fault which he would 'repent of for a long Time.'

It was in vain for our Rabbies to think of convincing their Adversaries by the Sentiments of the Rabbies, and by the great Number of *Jews* that adhere to the Talmud; *We have no other Writings*, replied the Caraites, *for the Rule of our Faith, than the twenty-four Books of the Bible* †; *which you own as well as we, were written by Persons whom God had inspired. We are therefore justifiable in rejecting all human Traditions which are contrary thereunto. What can human Sentiments avail against the Command of God, who is unchangeable, and not liable to Passions? Whereas, were he such as the Talmud,*

* Heidam *de Origine Erroris*, p. 255.

† The Author of the Caraite Commentary, which goes by the Name of *Aaron's*, the Son of *Joseph*, who lived in the Close of the XIIIth Century, and whose Work is preserved in M S. in the Library of the Fathers of the Oratory at *Paris*, whither it was brought from *Constantinople*, approves of all the Books of the Bible which are in the *Jewish* Canon, and reckons up twenty-four of them, as others do.

and

and the Writings of the Rabbies represent him, the Creator would be more vile, and more to be pitied than the Creature.

I know not how it happens, dear *Monceca*, that our Brethren are so infatuated with a Number of Notions, that are so inconsistent with the Idea which we ought to have of the Almighty. That Medley of Chimæras and Superstitions, which we have added to the written Law, is astonishing to a Man of Sense, and renders him shy of certain Ceremonies, which would be more reasonable if they were not so numerous. Superstitions are the same Thing to Religion, as useless Suckers are to Trees, which, by wasting the Spirit and Juice, leave the Trunk sapless, and hinder it from bearing Fruit. In the several Systems of Faith that are in the World, it is easy to perceive, that those which are most incumbered with superstitious Ceremonies, are least put in Practice as to the Essentials. A *Jew* breaks the Commandments of God ten Times a Day, without regarding what he does, and seems to mind Nothing but the Ceremonies and Customs of the *Sabbath-Day*. A Man will be guilty of a Robbery or Adultery, who would scruple to cut his Bread with the Knife of a *Nazarene*. If these Customs were commanded in the Law, they might be justified, did they appear ever so ridiculous; but since they have Nothing for their Foundation, but the chimærical Visions of some of our Elders, I own to thee, that I can only approve of those People, who making Use of the Reason which God has given them for their Guide, are for adhering precisely to what they find written in our sacred Books. And since I take thee for my Friend, whom I can trust with my most secret Thoughts, I must tell thee, that I have resolved to embrace the Sentiments of the *Caraites*, and to quit those of the *Rabbinists* entirely. I am

ſenſible that my Alteration of Sentiments will make a ſurpriſing Noiſe, that our Synagogues will grumble at it, and that, as I am one of the ſenior Rabbies, my Proceeding may be attended with Conſequences which tend to open the Eyes of many others; but worldly Intereſts ought not to hinder us from adhering to the Truth as ſoon as we perceive it. To give the leſs Occaſion for ſpeaking of my Change, I have actually purpoſed a Voyage to *Ægypt*; I am going to ſettle at *Cairo*, where I ſhall live with my new Brethren, the pure *Jews*, and the only true Obſervers of the Law of *Moſes* *. As thou mighteſt be apt to think, that I have adopted this new Opinion without having well examined it, I will give thee the particular Reaſons which determined me to it.

Our Rabbies ſay, that neither the two Tables, nor even the Pentateuch, contain every Thing that was enjoined to *Moſes* upon the Mountain. They ſay, it is evident, that if God had had Nothing to dictate but the written Law, an Hour only would have been ſufficient for it, or at moſt five or ſix. They conclude, that he gave it to *Moſes* in the Day-time, and that he explained it to him in the Night. It is this Explanation that they call the *Oral Law*, which *Moſes* taught to *Joſhua* his Succeſſor, and *Joſhua* to the Seventy Elders, who tranſmitted it thus commented to their Poſterity, and even to the laſt of the Prophets, from whom the great Sanhedrin received it †. From that Time

* At *Cairo*, *Conſtantinople*, and even in *Muſcovy*, there are ſeveral *Caraites*, who have their ſeparate Synagogues, and think themſelves the only true *Jews*.

† The grand Sanhedrin was the chief Tribunal of the *Jews*, which was held at *Jeruſalem*. The Term is taken from the *Greek* Συνεδριον, which ſignifies *conceſſus*, *i. e.* an Aſſembly of Men ſitting.

the

the Fathers have transmitted to their Children, which is the Practice at this Day, and serves for a Rule when the written Law is mute.

Without stopping, dear *Monceca*, to examine the Foundation for the Rabbies' Opinion that God dictated the Law in the Day-time, and explained it in the Night, because there is Nothing of it in the Bible; and admitting, for the Sake of shortening the Dispute, that *Moses*, received several Ordinances from the Mouth of the Almighty, yet I can never think that he spent so many Days in prescribing the ridiculous Ceremonies and odd Whimsies of the Talmud. And if I admit that God commanded several Things to *Moses*, which that Prophet did not set down in Writing, and which are preserved by Tradition, I maintain on the other Hand, that every Thing which is absurd and ridiculous in the said Tradition, has been added to it in Process of Time; and that every Age having augmented it with some Error, the Talmud is become the Summary of that pretended Tradition.

If thou dost but consider, dear *Monceca*, after what Manner that monstrous Work was composed, compiled, and brought to Perfection, thou wilt see Error, Absurdities and Lies abound more and more in it, the farther it comes down from the Time in which the written Law was given. About the 188th Year of the *Nazarenes*, Rabbi *Judah Hakkadosh* compiled the Writings of the High-Priest called *Misna*, and that was the first Original of the Talmud. Though there are many Faults to be found with it, yet that Work is very far from being as bad as the second Collection *, written in 469 by Rabbi *Jochanam*, and some other *Hebrews*

* The Talmud of *Jerusalem*, so called because it was made in that City.

who were his Assistants. Finally, in 476 *Asa* and *Hammai*, Rabbies of *Babylon*, added new Visions to this Book, and put it in the Condition in which we now see it *, some ridiculous Errors excepted, which the Rabbi *Meïr* added about the Year 546, to the Impertinencies of *Asa* his Father, whose Memoirs were all in his Possession.

I therefore appeal to thy own Conscience, dear *Monceca*, whether thou dost think that the Authority of such a Work, which the older it is proves the fuller of Errors, and which deviates in all Points from the primitive Simplicity of our Religion, ought to influence my Heart more than the Writings of *Moses* and the ancient Prophets, and more than my natural Reason, which plainly demonstrates to me that the Talmud is Nothing but a Heap of Imposture, Chimæras, and Blasphemies? Where is the Man, I do not say that is learned, but that is ever so silly, who has not an infinite Contempt for a Book which says, that *God commanded a Sacrifice to attone for his own Faults*? What, is God a Sinner! Is God subject to Vice! in that Case he cannot be perfect: Is he not therefore liable to all the Misfortunes of the human Nature? How durst he punish a Crime, when it is he himself commits it? I tremble, dear *Monceca*, when I transcribe these Blasphemies; it is with Reluctance that my Hand commits them to Paper. I had not duly examined my Religion hitherto; I was in an Error owing to my Prejudices and to my Neglect. The Dispute of the Caraites has cast a Beam of Light into my Soul, which has opened my Eyes to see the dreadful Mistakes into which I was plunged. As soon as I perceived Reason to be on the Side of my Adversaries, I did not recur to So-

* The Talmud of *Babylon*.

phistry

phistry to prevent me from being enlightened. I honestly confessed my Error, and my Humility was of Service to pluck me out of that Abyss, in which my Brethren the Rabbies continue plunged.

Endeavour to imitate my Example; abandon thy Prejudices, my dear *Aaron*; make Use of thy Reason to combat them; and consider that if there is a God, he cannot be such as the Talmud represents him to us. No-body is more convinced than thou art of the absolute Necessity of the Existence of a Being, sovereignly perfect. Embrace therefore the Sentiment of the Caraites, who do not injure the Divine Being. I fear that in the Country were thou art, thou hast been accustomed to lean too much to pretended Tradition; which is the strong Hold of the *Nazaréne* Papists, and the very Rampart of their Errors. But consider that even among them there is a Sort of Caraites who have refined their Reason, and reduced it to it's primitive Establishment. Do thou make Use of their Arguments to reject a Tradition which is not conformable to the Text.

Fare thee well, dear *Monceca*, and live happy and content.

LETTER XLV.

From AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris, *to* JACOB BRITO, *at* Turin.

Dear JACOB,

THY Letters relating to the *Genoese* and *Piedmontese*, gave me great Pleasure: I envy thy Condition, and do not think my Life so happy as a

Traveller's. He sees new Objects continually which both divert and instruct him; he cultivates his Understanding without making a Toil of it, and studies in the great Volume of the World, the only Book in which we can learn to know Men. Let a Man's Genius be what it will, one can attain but to a superficial Knowledge of the Manners of Nations by a Library; for in the exactest Relations there are, I warrant, twenty Anecdotes omitted which give the Character of a People, and which cannot be perceived but by living with them. To this add the Contradiction there is in most of the Journals of Travellers, and the Partiality with which they are written.

The ancient Philosophers were for most Part great Travellers: *Plato* went to hear *Euclid* at *Megara*, annd *Theodore* the Mathematician at *Cyrene*: He travelled into *Ægypt*, to converse there with the Priests; and it is even said, that in that very Country he learned our Religion. This however is true, that he speaks of God with much more Dignity than the other Pagan Philosophers. Nevertheless he maintained some Errors, which set him at a vast Distance from the Principles of our Holy Law. He held that there was but one Almighty God, the sovereign Maker of all Things; but he admitted of a Croud of subaltern Gods and Demi-Gods, subject indeed to the former, but partaking his Divinity *. It is to no Purpose to see if there is any Thing in such Doctrine that resembles *Judaism*, for the Unity of God is the Basis of our Faith.

* *Plato*, both in his *Timæus* and his *de Legibus* says, that the World is a God, as are also Heaven, Earth, and the Mind, and all those whom we receive by Instruction from our Ancestors. *Cic. de Nat. Deorum*, lib. i. cap. 12.

The

The primitive *Nazarenes* were for the most Part of this Philosopher's Sect; and they fancied that they saw all the Mysteries of their Religion in his Writings. One of their Priests affirms that *Plato*'s Books were of very great Service in explaining a great many Truths of the *Nazarene* Faith to him *. Two others of their Doctors pretend, that he knew one of their most secret Mysteries †. And the primitive *Nazarenes* had almost recognized him for one of their Saints. At a Time when Men were fond of particular Sects, they were under such a Necessity of supporting their Opinions with the Authority of some eminent Philosopher, that they were obliged to adopt the Writings of *Plato*, as what were most agreeable to *Judaism* and *Nazarenism*. Most of them were so well convinced of the pretended Faith which they ascribed to this Philosopher, that near 796 Years after the Establishment of their Religion, they were for granting him the Spirit of Prophecy. In the Reign of *Constantine* VI. and *Irene* his Mother, a very ancient Sepulchre was opened with a dead Body in it, which was affirmed to be *Plato*'s: It had a Plate of Gold about the Neck, and this Inscription on it: *Christ shall be born of a Virgin: I believe in him; and thou shalt see me once more in the Days of* Irene

* I shewed him (*Simplianus*) the Course of my Error; and when I mentioned that I had read some Books of the *Platonists*, which were translated into the *Latin* Tongue by *Victorinus*, heretofore Rhetorician at *Rome*, who I had heard died a Christian, he congratulated me that I had not been deceived by the Writings of other Philosophers full of Fallacy and Delusion, with respect to the Elements of this World. *Augustin. Confess. lib.* viii. *cap.* 2.

† *Justin Martyr*, and *Clement of Alexandria*:

and Constantine *. It would have been easy for Men, free of their Prejudices, to see that both the Plate and the Inscription on it, were as modern as the Tomb was ancient. But the *Nazarene* Doctors, fond of Miracles, adopted that, or at least endeavoured to render it probable; and a certain Fryar, surnamed the *Angel of the School*, besides some other Writers †, and not long ago a certain Jesuit ‡, have made a great many very trifling Reflexions upon this Inscription.

I cannot conceive, dear *Brito*, what the *Nazarenes* mean by offering to rest the Truth of their Religion upon such Fables. Such Absurdities were enough to discredit the Truth: I am the more surprised that they should give ear unto such Oddities, because they have no Need of all those pious Impostures. For in short (as I may speak my Mind freely to thee) there are few Religions which have such strong Proofs as those of the *Nazarene* People.

I have had several Disputes with some Men of Learning, and was astonished at certain Things of which they in a Manner convinced me. It must be owned that if the Prophecies have not been really fulfilled, they have been so near being accomplished, that whoever will examine them, will find our Sentiments very difficult to be defended. The *Nazarenes* say, we have no Way left to come off, but by having Recourse to the Etymology and Signification of some Words. They say, that since the Text is clearly against us, we endeavour to

* This Passage is reported by *Zonaras*, a *Greek* Historian, from whence it was translated into *Latin* by *Jerome Wolfius*, and printed at *Basil* in 1557. See his Tome iii.

† *Paul* the Deacon, *lib.* xxiii. *Sigebert. Gembrard, lib.* iii.

‡ *Canisius de Beata Virgine, lib.* ii.

puzzle

puzzle it, by ridiculous Glosses and forced Explanations of certain Expressions. I am sometimes obliged to own these Facts; but then I retreat to our Tradition: I make Use of the same Arguments and the same Weapons which they make Use of against Adversaries, even in their own Religion. They cannot refuse me a Point from which they themselves reap so much Advantage, and to which they grant such Authority. Consequently I make Use of our Tradition as an invincible Rampart: I oppose the Authority of the Rabbies to that of the Priests, and the Talmud to the Books of their chief Doctors; and if I do not clear up the Dispute, I am at least sure of spinning it out to Eternity.

I own to thee that I should be very much gravelled, if the *Nazarene* Papists made the same Objection to me as the *Nazarene* Protestants form against them; and if they should confine me to the Text of Scripture, and to the Evidence of natural Reason. This Way of disputing is terrible, and hinders all Subterfuges. It is not possible to make Use of any of those Quirks, which are so useful for evading the Ground of the Question. The only Remedy that can be had, is to cavil at certain Expressions, and to give an advantageous or disadvantageous Turn to certain Passages; and I own that by this Means Disputes may be carried on for Ages, and a Number of Volumes in Folio may be spun out, by the learned Men of the several Parties. But in Disputes of this Kind, whoever will examine them without Prejudice, judges more easily of the Question in Debate, than when there is a Necessity of reconciling the various Authorities of a Number of Writers, and the Validity of two different Traditions.

The *Nazarenes* in general are fond to support their Arguments by Miracles and Prodigies: A sur-

prizing Event, be it ever so whimsical; gives them as much Delight as Geometrical Evidence. There is no Matter, no Subject, in which they do not think Heaven interposes. Do they win a Battle; it is not to their Valour that they are obliged for it; it is to St. *George* and St. *Victor*; who quitting the celestial Mansions, came to fight at the Head of their Squadrons, and amuse themselves with cutting off Arms and Heads †. A dismal Employment, in my Opinion, for People that are in their Senses; much more so for Saints. Thou wilt, perhaps, imagine that such as they come to help are therefore good People: Quite otherwise. Those were infamous Robbers, who, under the Veil of Religion, and the Pretext of a Holy War, committed all Sorts of Outrage, Murder, and Rapine. The *Nazarenes* own these Facts, and to those Crimes they impute the Miscarriage of that Enterprize. One *Bernard*, who had preached throughout *Europe* for the Execution of that Enterprize, and who prophesied mighty Matters that would ensue from it, was the first Dupe to the ill Success of that Holy War. To salve his Reputation, he had no Remedy but to charge it upon the Crimes of those who undertook it. A merry Way of prophesying this; to foretel what will never happen, and not to say one Word of what will actually come to pass.

As mortified as the *Nazarenes* may well be, to think of the chimerical Notions with which they have been so often infatuated, yet if To-morrow any two Fryars of Reputation were to begin their Preachments again, there would be Multitudes enough to undertake the pious Journey, in order

† Battle of *Iconium*, won at the Time of the *Croisades*. *Maimbourg*'s Hist. of the *Croisades*, lib. v.

to

to commit all Manner of Crimes in *Paleſtine*, and ſacrifice Men to the God of Peace, to whom Murder and the Shedding of human Blood is ſo odious.

The *Nazarenes* are all agreed in this Principle, and their Church even values itſelf for it's Abhorrence of Homicide. One would therefore take it to be a neceſſary Conſequence of this Truth, that they ſhould only deſire to influence and enlighten Mankind by Good-Nature and Reaſon. But it ſeems that they have a conſtant Maxim, to think one Way, and to act another. Nothing is more mild, more pathetic than their Diſcourſes; Nothing ſo harſh, ſo outrageous and violent as their Conduct; and what is ſtill more ſurprizing, is, that they think to colour the Iniquity of their Actions by ſome ſpecious external Appearances. When the Inquiſition orders a *Jew* to the Stake in *Portugal*, they make him a very polite Compliment, and aſſure him that they are very ſorry they are going to deliver him up to Execution; and as it would not be ſuitable for them to paſs the Sentence of Death, they cauſe it to be read by a Lay Judge.

All theſe ridiculous Cruelties put me in Mind of a pleaſant Expedient thought of by *Turpin*, the Archbiſhop in the Time of *Charlemain*. For the diſpatching of ſome *Saracens* and other Adverſaries of his as Occaſion preſented, he made Uſe of no Sword, but he had a Club like that of *Hercules*, with which he epiſcopally knocked them on the Head *. There has been a Time when it was counted as a Favour for a Man to be only committed to the Gallies, in order to enlighten his Mind: Let us leave ſuch pernicious Methods to Error, and never Uſe any Means to perſuade but Mildneſs and Reaſon, even though we ſhould have the ſame Power as the *Nazarenes*.

* *Boyardo* and *Arioſto*.

They

They talk perpetually of the vast Extent of their Religion, and of the Numbers of Proselytes that they make every Day; but they do not perceive that they only make Slaves of their Converts instead of true Children. The *Spaniards* thought they acted piously when they forced a prodigious Number of *Indians* to bend their Knees to the Image of a Saint, and to consent to their being admitted into Communion with the *Nazarenes*, till they could escape the Hands of their Executioners, and fly to their ancient Countrymen.

Tyranny in Religion gives a Philosopher the strongest Prejudice to it. The God of Peace cannot chuse a Worship which sheds human Blood at the Altars. The pious Cruelty of the *Spaniards* sacrificed more *Mexicans* in one Day to the Propagation of *Nazarenism*, than the Priests of *Diana* sacrificed in *Tauris* during all the Time of Paganism. What Crimes, Murders, and Robberies, have been committed in *Europe* for these two hundred Years on the vain Pretence of Religion! What Outrages is not the Mind of Man liable to be hurried to, when seized with Superstition? The Son has been seen to stick a Dagger into the Breast of his Father, and to believe that when he pierced his Heart, he forced his Way to Heaven. Let us leave such pernicious Sentiments, dear *Brito*, to the *Nazarenes*, and be always persuaded that Violence is the last Resource of a Religion which is destitute of Truth to convince.

Fare thee well, dear *Brito*, and let me hear from thee.

LETTER

LETTER XLVI.

From AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris, *to* ISAAC ONIS, *a Rabbi, at* Constantinople.

THY Letter, dear *Isaac*, surprized me not a little, and I make no doubt but thy Change of Principles astonishes all the *Jews*, and touches thy Brethren to the Quick. I am assured that thou didst not determine to embrace the Opinion of the Caraites without mature Reflexion *. But I could have wished that thy Determination had not been so quick. Many Things seems clear and evident at the first or second View, which upon the third Inspection become problematical. Thou seemest in my Opinion to have too great a Contempt for the Authority of Tradition. I am sensible that it ought to submit when the Text is against it; but then, on the other Hand, when the latter is obscure and seems unintelligible, it must be made Use of to illustrate it. All Religions, even those which are most contrary to Tradition, do not reject it when it seems to tally with Reason and the ancient Writings; which is a Point necessary to have been considered; nevertheless I fear that at the first Motion thou didst not give it the least Credit. It appears by thy Letter that those Instances in which thou didst find it to be contrary to Truth, made thee remiss in considering whether it was true and just in others. Be this as it will, and whatever be thy Way of thinking, Nothing can abate my Af-

* See LETTER XLIV.

fection

fection for thee. I loved thee when a Rabbiniſt, I will love thee as a Caraite; and ſhouldeſt thou turn *Nazarene*, my Heart would follow thee to the Midſt of their Temples. I will not be guilty of the Folly of the falſe Friends of our Age, who are ignorant of the Prerogatives of Friendſhip in thoſe virtuous Hearts which are united by Eſteem and Sympathy. This Band, according to them, is Nothing but a Sort of Commerce, founded upon Neceſſity or Conveniency, and ſometimes even upon Pleaſure †. The Women eſpecially have ſcarce any

† The Friends of our Age are liable to the Reproaches which *Cicero* caſt upon the *Epicureans*, *Nam quibuſdam quos audio ſapientes habitos in Græciâ, placuiſſe opinor mirabilia quædam. Sed nihil eſt quod illi non perſequantur ſuis Argutiis; partim fugiendas eſſe nimias Amicitias, ne neceſſe ſit unum ſolicitum eſſe pro pluribus; ſatis ſuperque eſſe ſuarum cuique Rerum, alienis nimis implicari moleſtum eſſe quam laxiſſimas habenas habere amicitiæ, quas vel adducas cum velis, vel remittas; caput enim eſſe ad beatè vivendum ſecuritatem, quâ frui non poſſit animus, ſi tanquam parturiat unus pro pluribus.* Cicero de Amicit. cap. xiii. 'Some of the 'Greeks, ſays he, who have paſſed in their Country 'for wiſe Men, have entertained very odd Notions on 'the Subject now mentioned; for there is no Extrava-'gance into which the Quirks of thoſe People do not 'carry them. Some ſay, that too ſtrict Friendſhips 'ſhould be avoided, for fear of being involved in the 'Care and Trouble of others; every one having Buſi-'neſs enough of his own to mind, and Nothing being 'more diſagreeable than to enter too far into the 'Concerns of others; and that the moſt convenient 'Friendſhips are thoſe whoſe Reins are ſo looſe, that 'they may be either lengthened or ſhortened at Plea-'ſure; ſince in order to lead a happy Life, the Secret 'is to be free from all Care, which is not poſſible 'when a Man is intangled in the Affairs of others, and 'when

any other Taste in their Friendships. It is Pleasure that unites them, Pleasure divides them, and they are more fickle in Friendship than they are in Love.

There are twenty thousand Women at *Paris*, who have had Admirers that have left them in less than three Months, but never had more than one Lover in all their Lives. This Position may appear to thee a little extravagant, and perhaps thou wilt Question whether it is possible, that in a City where the Women are reckoned so gay, there should be twenty Thousand that never had more than one Lover. Thou wouldest sooner be inclined to think there are twenty thousand Women who never had one Lover, than that they stuck to the First. Methinks I hear thee say, *That it is more Virtue in a Woman to have but one Lover, than to have none at all. What Struggle has a Woman in denying herself a Pleasure that she knows Nothing of?* Her Virtue has not those dangerous Ideas to grapple with, which represent certain Situations to the Mind, that are the most terrible Foes to Women that have been in Love.

I agree with thee, that my Opinion has something in it which is surprizing; but when it is examined, it seems so plausible, that one can hardly refuse to subscribe to it. The Character of Dishonesty which is fixed on the Women, is principally owing to the Prerogative that the Men have thought fit to appropriate to themselves, of prescribing severe Rules to them almost impossible to be observed, and at the same Time to dispense with themselves for not keeping the same. They have thought it their Right to demand of the Women, that they should be deaf to the Voice of Nature, while they indulge their

' when his Anxiety for them may be compared to the ' Pains of Child-bearing.'

dear

dear selves in the Privilege of gratifying all their Desires, and of yielding to all their Inclinations. In order, therefore, to judge truly of the fickle Temper, which is said to be the Characteristic of the Fair Sex, Things should be set upon a just Parity; and without requiring Impossibilities of them, it should be considered, Prejudice apart, whether, supposing the Women to be ever so fickle, they are not a hundred Times more constant than the Men.

When the fine Gentleman breaks his Engagement with a Lady, his Conduct is justified by his Quality; he acts in Character, and no-body rails at him for his Treachery. Every Mistress whom he abandons, is only an Accession to his former Triumphs. But if she offers to make a Reprisal upon her Spark for his Inconstancy; if, in order to punish him or to reclaim him by Jealousy, she tops a Rival upon him, it is all over with her, she is presently a false Woman, a Coquette, a Flirt, and what not. All the Tribe of Gallants condemn her without Mercy; and the very Action which redounds to the Honour of the fine Gentleman, for ever ruins the Woman who has been so unfortunate as to take a Fancy to him.

A jealous, fantastical, peevish Bigot of a Husband, fancies strange Chimæras, and takes all the wild Visions with which he is disturbed, to be Realities. The whole Society of Husbands takes his Part. They pity him, but condemn his Spouse without hearing her. The whole Fair Sex are condemned in the Lump, by the thundering Sentence which the jealous Senate passes upon her; and from Generation to Generation, every Father breeds up his Son in his own jealous Maxims, and does not forget to quote her for an Example of conjugal Infidelity.

A Coxcomb

A Coxcomb gives himself Airs with a Woman of whom he has but a slender Knowledge. He speaks to her at Church, ogles her with his Glass at the Opera, and teazes her with his insipid Compliments in the Walks. This is sufficient to make the Public believe that he is well with her. The Reputation of having listened to a Fool, is all her Reward for having been abused by him; and if she is so unhappy as to meet with more than one such Gallant, the Public calls them all her Lovers.

These, dear *Isaac*, are some of the Reasons which determine the Operation of the Inconstancy of the Fair Sex. The Multitude think upon this Occasion as they do in all other Cases, but not with better Judgments than they are wont to do. There are two Reasons which induce me to think that the Women are more constant than the Men. The first is a Sort of Confusion that is inseparable from their Levities, which, let what will be said, constrains them very much. The second is the Vivacity of their Sentiments; the tendereſt Man compared to a Woman really in Love, being as cold as Ice. It is over the Fair Sex that Love exerts all it's Prerogatives; it is that Sex which feels all the Force of it's Transports, and it's Impulses mixed with Tenderness, Fear, Anger, Spite, Hope, and Jealousy. All these Passions reign in the Heart of a Woman that is in Love; one while, indeed, they succeed to one another, and at another Time they act all together.

History has transmitted to us the Names and Actions of a great many Women, who have distinguished themselves by their Constancy and Fidelity. Without going back to past Centuries, we see Passions every Day that justify my Opinion. A *Nazarene* Doctor of my Acquaintance, a great Director

rector of Consciences, said once in my Company, that delicate and tender Love is the roughest Enemy which the Tribunal where the *Parisians* are absolved from their Sins, finds among the Women. In my former Letters I mentioned that Sort of Spiritual Pond to thee, where the Monks assume the Prerogative of washing away Sins on the Repetition of certain Prayers, or the Observation of certain Fasts by them enjoined. They all agree, that a Woman who has had several Amours, often sacrifices her Lovers to avoid fasting three *Saturdays*; but they affirm, that a Woman whose Heart has been smitten but once, had rather keep ten Lents than suppress one single Glance of her Eye, or render it less wanton.

Perhaps thou wilt ask me, Why the Women who are so attached to their Lovers, are so unstable in Respect to their Friends? I will tell thee for Answer, That with them Friendship is generally no more than a Colour for Love. A Bosom-Friend among Women, is only another Word for Confidant, whose Reign continues no longer than while he discharges his Trust well; for as soon as he neglects it, and is no longer useful, his Credit sinks, he becomes indifferent, and sometimes a Burden: But the Secrets intrusted with him, oblige those that imparted them to carry it fair to him, and this Constraint is often attended with Hatred in the Tail of it.

Do not fear, my dear *Isaac*, that our Friendship will have any such Fate; for it is founded on Virtue, and cemented by Esteem, so that Nothing can shake it. Thy Life is as dear to me as my own; *Pylades* was not fonder of *Orestes*. I own to thee that I have been under terrible Apprehensions, since thou acquaintest me of thy Conversion, and could wish it had not been known till thou hadest been

gone

gone from *Constantinople*. I am afraid thy Brethren will owe thee a Spite; for I know the vindictive Temper of our Nation. There is Nothing that thy Brethren will not do to punish thee, for having abandoned them. I will now give thee an Instance of their Rage.

When *Spinosa* published his Book, the *Jews* were enraged against him; they looked on him as an Apostate the more dangerous, because he thoroughly knew all the Principles of our Law, understood *Hebrew* perfectly, and was capable of doing us a great deal of Mischief. Nevertheless he had not yet left our Communion, but went, though with a careless Air, to the Synagogue. One Day, as he was going out of it, a fanatical *Jew* gave him a Wound with a Knife; which, though it did not prove mortal, he totally abandoned the Faith of *Israel*; and after that Accident had no farther Correspondence with us.

Our Nation has been in all Ages revengeful, and has not stuck even at Treachery to satisfy it's Resentment. I am so much in Pain for thy Life, that it obliges me to speak against my own Brethren; but, in short, thy Safety is a lawful Excuse for the Liberty I take in reproving those Offences. *Tacitus*, a *Roman* Historian, whose Authority is of great Weight, accuses our Fathers of bearing a cruel Hatred and Antipathy to all who are not of their Faith. Some *French* Writers say, that we were drove out of their Country for no Cause, but for the Evils we endeavoured to bring upon the whole Nation. Others say, we were accused of a Design to poison their Wells and Fountains. The Knights of *Malta* charge us with having been the Cause of the Loss of *Rhodes*, out of Spite to their Religion. In the Name of the God of our Fathers, dear *Isaac*, take great Care of thy own Safety.

If

If thou doſt but conſider how much thoſe Prejudices are to be dreaded, with which we are inſpired by Superſtition, thou wilt ſee that thou canſt not take too much Care to defend thyſelf from the Attacks that may be made upon thee, which are the more dangerous becauſe they are covered with the Veil of Religion. How often has not this ſpecious Pretext been made Uſe of to colour the moſt ſecret Vices? It was Fanaticiſm, which, under the Cloak of Zeal for *Nazareniſm*, deprived *France* of the greateſt of her Kings; Monkiſh Superſtition made ſeveral Thruſts at his Life. In fine, a Monſter vomited up in Wrath by Hell, encouraged by the Remnant of the League, ſeduced by pernicious Diſcourſes, nouriſhed in Rebellion, and born to be the Plague of it's Country, did that in one Moment, which was out of the Power of twenty Battles.

The Hatred which is owing to Differences in Religion is implacable, and with the Generality of People ſeems to juſtify the moſt enormous Tranſgreſſions. The Prieſts who are concerned in this Quarrel, exaſperate the Minds of other Men by their Preachments, Exhortations, and Examples. The People fondly follow thoſe who are at the Head of their Religion: They are accuſtomed to look upon them as the Oracles of the Deity. And judge thou whether there is any Crime which ſilly People will not commit, when they think they thereby perform the Law of the Almighty, and ſecure to themſelves everlaſting Happineſs.

Conſider well, dear *Iſaac*, what I have been ſaying; take heed of thy Brethren the Rabbies; be upon thy Guard againſt other *Jews*; and, in a word, beware of all thoſe whom thy Change of Opinion may any wiſe concern.

Live as peaceable and contented as I wiſh.

LETTER

LETTER XLVII.

From JACOB BRITO, *at* Turin, *to* ARON MONCECA, *at* Paris.

I SHALL be going very quickly, dear *Monceca*, to *Venice*; for a Week is the most that I purpose to spend at *Turin*. I acquainted thee before of what I had observed most remarkable in the Manners of the *Piedmontese*; and since my last Letter I have made but very little Discovery. The *Piedmontese* Manner of living is so uniform, that it does not furnish that Variety of Reflexions which rise so fast at *Paris*. They live, and think at *Turin* the last Day of the Year as they did on the first; and the only Thing in which any Change is perceiveable, is the Fashion of Dress. The Ladies and the fine Sparks are incessantly following the *French* Modes; but here are none of those sudden Alterations of Manners and Customs. This Nation is incapable of being infatuated with one Set of Opinions in the Morning, and with the Contrary at Night; for it has neither Vivacity enough, nor enough of Inconstancy. If St. *Paris* had acquired the same Credit at *Turin* as he had some Time ago at *Paris*, he would still have preserved it; whereas this poor Saint has no Devotees here, but a few Fanatics and Fish-Women.

Great Honours are paid in this Country to one *Philip de Neri*, who is said to be the Guardian of the City of *Turin*, and it's Advocate with God. It has a magnificent

a magnificent Temple *, adorned with Pictures by the greatest Masters †. I one Place his is drawn, supported by Angels and Cherubim, to the Presence of God, and by him admitted into his Glory. A Number of Lamps burn incessantly before this Image: And hither the *Piedmontese* come to offer their Vows, and put up their Prayers to their Protector. Near this Altar is the Sanctuary, in which the *Nazarenes* pretend that God resides; but where one Man addresses his Vows directly to God, there are a Hundred that only address him through the Canal of *Philip de Neri*.

The *Nazarenes*, and especially the *Italians*, seem as if they were afraid to call upon God himself, just like certain Persons who having offended another, have not the Power or Courage to stand in his Presence, and therefore send Proposals of Accommodation by a third Hand. I asked them, if they thought, when they addressed themselves to *Philip de Neri*, that God did not hear them, and if they imagined it was possible that there was any Place in which God was not present? They made me answer, That they did not presume to maintain such an Error. *If it be so*, said I, *and that God knows your Conversation with* Philip de Neri, *why do not you apply to him directly? Such Ceremonies may as well be avoided, and you should not go so far round about; for before your Protector makes his Report, God has already heard you.*

* This Church is not yet finished, but Men are continually at work upon it, and it will be one of the finest Fabrics in *Italy*.

† There is one by *Carlo Maratti*, another by *Trevisani*, and a third by the famous *Solyman*; and it is the latter which represents the Admission of *Philip de Neri* into Heaven.

The

The *Nazarenes* evade these Arguments by vain Sophistry; they pretend that by the Intercession of a Saint, whose Prayers are always pure, and well received by the Almighty, their Petitions are more easily granted. Poor blind Sots! who do not see that it is the Purity and Disposition of the Heart of him, who prays upon Eearth, that engages Favours from Heaven. Were it not so, a Miscreant might hope to obtain God's Mercy, as well as an honest Man. God does not depend upon the Saints for his Judgment of the Heart. If he did the Celestial Court would be like a *Norman* Tribunal, and People would be saved or damned according as they had a good Sollicitor or Advocate, and as they could engage his Friendship by a great Number of Tapers burnt to his Honour, or by some other Presents. If this were the Case, I assure thee, dear *Monceca*, that this *Philip de Neri* would have a great deal of Work upon his Hands, and that he would be obliged to undertake the Affairs of all the Inhabitants of *Turin*.

I was Yesterday at a Festival which was celebrated in his Temple, where a Monk pronounced his Panegyric, and extolled him highly because he was never married, but hindered all his Disciples from ever entering into that State, by obliging them as well as himself to stick to the Order of the Priesthood, from which all are excluded that are not Batchelors. This Preacher expatiated a good deal upon the Observation of Chastity, and on the State of Purity, of which he gave so fine a Description, that it put Marriage quite out of Countenance. I was very much astonished that they suffered Maxims to be published so contrary to the good of Society. *If all these People*, said I to myself, *who hear this Declaimer go away convinced by his Sophistry*, Piedmont *will soon be depopulated; we shall see Nothing for one*

while but Priests, Fryars, and Bigots. Society will soon be ruined, and the Country destroyed: According to this Preacher, the State of Celibacy is much the purest and most agreeable to Nazarenism. *In a Religion they who believe it ought to strive to attain to Perfection. All the* Piedmontese *therefore will follow his Advice, and by keeping to Celibacy will ruin Society.*

We think very differently, dear *Monceca*, for in our Holy Religion Multiplication is commanded: It is promised and granted to us by Heaven as an essential Mark of it's Goodness. As to the Suppression of Marriage among the *Nazarene* Priests, Vanity has been partly the Occasion of it; for by that Means they thought to render themselves more respected by the People. It is said that when they met to determine this Question, all the old Men were for continuing the Licence for the Priests to marry; but that the young ones strongly opposed, and carried it. But the Disorders with which that Restriction has been attended, have given cause to all Men of Sense to regret the Loss of the ancient Custom. And one of the *Nazarene* sovereign Pontiffs says expresly in his Writings, That in order to prevent and stop much Wickedness, it were very necessary to restore Things to their old Footing †.

When the Preacher had finished his Panegyric, several Hymns were sung to Music; and the fa-

† This is the learned Pope *Pius* II. among whose Sentences and Proverbs we read this, *Sacerdotibus magnâ ratione sublatas Nuptias majori restituendas videri, i. e.* There was a great Reason for taking away Priests Marriages, but there is a greater for restoring them. *See* Platina's *Lives of the Popes, printed at* Venice, *by* Fontaneto 1518, *in Folio, Pag.* 155, *and Pag.* 399, *of the Folio Edition at* Venice, *by* Leoncino.

mous

mous *Somis*, of whom I have already made mention to thee, played upon the Violin so sweetly, that the Souls of all who heard the Harmony, seemed to be in a Rapture. In all the Praise of which they were so lavish to *Philip de Neri*, very little mention was made of God, and he was not invoked at all till towards the Conclusion of the Festival and Ceremony.

As they went out of the *Nazarene* Temple, I asked where I might again hear that famous Musician, who had given me such a Delight. When I was at *Rome* I heard one *Montanari*, Scholar to the famous *Corelli*, the Father of Harmony: He had as great Practice as this *Piedmontese*, but he had neither his Taste, nor Sweetness, nor that Command of his Instrument. He was so able a Man, that the *Grecians* would certainly have erected a Statue to him. He would have had People in Abundance to certify, that *Apollo* had lain with his Mother: He would have been told to his Face, that he was not the Son of his reputed Father; and after his Death he would have had the same Honours paid him at *Athens*, as *Philip de Neri* has at *Turin*. I was told that I might hear him play in a Concert that was held once every Week, at a certain rich Man's House: I desired a Friend of mine to carry me thither, where I heard another Musician ‡, who was as good at the Violoncello as *Somis* was at the Violin; so that it seemed to me as if Heaven had formed the two Musicians for one another, and that they were the only fit Persons to play in Concert. I was surprized at the few fine Voices I heard here, for there are not above one or two at *Turin* that sing tolerably. The *Piedmontese* have as excellent Symphonists, as they have pitiful Singers. Nevertheless, as they are a

‡ *Lanteri.*

conceited People, they do not Care to own the Fact.

Painting is as much a favourite Science at *Turin* as in the Rest of *Italy*, yet really there are none but Daubers in the City, except only one *Beaumont*, Painter to the King of *Sardinia*, who colours tolerably well, and designs correctly; but he is dull, not much acquainted with History, and conceited of his own Performances, which fall very short of that Perfection to which he fancies he has brought them. Some Time ago there was a Painter in this City, one Chevalier *Daniel*, a *Fleming* by Birth, a good Colourist, as his Countrymen generally are, but a better Designer than any of them. He died a while ago, and is succeeded by this *Beaumont*.

The *Piedmontese* in general have a Regard for the liberal Arts, but are very ignorant in the Sciences, as I signified to thee in one of my former Letters. When they hear mention made of several learned Men in *Europe*, they ask, whether they are good Catholics? If the Answers be, that they are *Armenians*, *Protestants*, *Jansenists*, *Jews*, then they run down *Le Clerc* for a Blockhead, *Bayle* for a Fool, *Arnaud* for a Lyar, and *Leo of Modena* ‡ for an Ignoramus. They are surprized that any Body should think a Man to be possessed of common Sense that is separated from their Communion. Whoever does not believe as the Monks believe, is according to them a Fool in this World, and damned in the next. The Libraries of the learned Men in this Country, consist of the Works of a great many Divines of this Side of the Mountains, and some *Italian* Poets. They who pretend to be skilled in the living Languages, have besides these some Romances

‡ A *Jewish* Rabbi, who wrote of the Sects and Ceremonies of the *Jews* in *Italian*.

and

and *French* Story-Books which the Bookſellers ſend for from *Geneva*, where all thoſe little Pieces are reprinted. Thou perceiveſt, dear *Monceca*, that were a Man to ſtudy forty Years in theſe Libraries, he would be but a ſtranger to the Truth, and his Head would be ſtuffed with Chimæras. Judge therefore of the *Piedmonteſe* Philoſophers.

Fare thee well, dear *Monceca*, and write to me hereafter at *Venice*.

LETTER XLVIII.

From AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris, *to* JACOB BRITO, *at* Venice.

SINCE I have been at *Paris*, the learned Men here have a double Portion of my Eſteem. When I was at *Conſtantinople*, I had no Notion of their Excellency and Dignity; but I look upon them now as the Preceptors of Mankind, and as the Organs which the Divinity employs to reveal to Men the Secrets of Nature. Inſtead of thinking as the *Piedmonteſe* do, who regard Learning in none but thoſe of their own Religion, I eſteem Knowledge and Merit wherever I find them: I revere them in a *Nazarene* as well as in a *Mahometan*, and, abſtracting from Matters of Faith, I learn of thoſe that can give me Light.

The Men of Learning are accuſed of Pride and Haughtineſs; but this is not the Character of thoſe that have acquired a juſt Reputation. No-body was more diſpaſſionate that *Bayle*, more ſociable than *Des Cartes* and *Gaſſendi*, and more modeſt than

Locke. They who talk at that Rate of the truly learned Men, confound them with certain diminutive Authors, who think themselves perfect, how much soever the Public slights them. *Racine* was a whole Year composing his Tragedy of *Phædra*, the Master-piece of the Theatre; and before he committed it to the Stage, he consulted his Friends a long Time, corrected several Passages by their Advice, and waited for the Success of his Performance before he would presume to pronounce it a good one. *Prado* wrote the same Piece in a Month's Time, gave it out boldly to be acted, and assured the Public that it was excellent: But it happened to him as it does commonly to the half-witted Authors; his Work quickly went to the Chandlers Shops, whereas *Racine*'s will reach to the latest Posterity.

Great Men are always reserved and modest, and being content with merting Praise, do not endeavour to court it; and for this they are the more praise-worthy, because if Vanity is pardonable, it is in that Man who deserves those shining Compliments, which are so becoming so many learned Men.

Honours are bestowed every Day upon a Fool of Quality, or the Son, Grandson, or Great Grandson of a Fool of Quality: Because a Man reckons up a long Train of ignorant ridiculous Ancestors, whose Example he follows to a Hair; he has forsooth a Right to be exempted from a Number of Imposts, and enjoys several Privileges that exalt him above the Rest of his Fellow Subjects. Suppose a Man had one of his Ancestors Captain of a Troop of Horse in the Time of the Croisades, what is that to me? What, shall I be obliged to pay Homage to an Idiot, because one of his Grandfathers was knocked on the Head by a *Saracen*, or because he made a Voyage beyond Sea? And shall I take

no Manner of Notice of another Man who is of Service to the whole World, whose moral Precepts form the Manners of the People, whose Mathematical Discoveries inrich whole Nations, and whose Knowledge transmits the History of the present or past Ages to the latest Posterity? A Man must be a Fool, even as bad a Fool as the Person that is homaged, to prefer chimerical Nobility to Learning and Virtue.

Mankind are pretty well come off from that servile Submission which they used to pay to old musty Rolls. There was a Time when as much Respect was paid throughout *Europe* to ancient Titles, as the *Egyptians* formerly had for Crocodiles, and the Onions that grew in their Gardens. But this slavish Veneration is shaken off, and this Superstition is banished to the petty Princes of *Germany*, where every Man, who, to the Misfortune of human Race, is born a Baron or a Landlord, assumes it as his Prerogative to torment the miserable Peasants that are his Vassals. He thinks himself as good a Sovereign as any in the World, though this Territory is seldom a League in Extent. His gross Ignorance, which leaves him in doubt, whether the World itself is above two Hundred, is the only Thing that can excuse his Vanity. In many Countries it is common to meet with these petty Tyrants, who have Nothing of Nobility but Antiquity, no Manners but Corruption, and Nothing of Man but the Shape. Dost think, dear *Brito*, that a Person who only makes Use of his natural Reason, can prefer such Nobles, that act only by Instinct, to Persons illustrious for their Learning, and recommendable for their Candour? Because a Man has a Right to add the Title of Duke or Marquis to his Name, shall he therefore impose on Men of good Sense? If that

were the Case, Nobility would be a Charm to Idiots.

Posterity wisely regulates the Rewards due to Men of Learning, and equals them to the greatest Princes: Three thousand Years after their Death, their Honour is not tarnished by that of the most renowned Heroes. *Homer* is as well known as *Achilles*, and the Name of *Virgil* as famous as that of *Augustus*. The able Historian, the famous Poet, the great Philosopher, have an Advantage over the Conqueror and the General. The Remembrance of the latter only represents that of some past Actions to the Imagination; but the Works of the Learned transmit their Genius, and revive the Knowledge of their Authors from Age to Age. Twenty Centuries after they are dead and rotten, they speak with as much Eloquence and Vivacity as when living, and all that read their Writings perceive their Genius. *Horace* and *Virgil* are as fragrant in these our Days, as they were at the Court of *Augustus*. The Heroes who have only rendered themselves famous by their Actions, have not near such an Ascendant over our Hearts: The bare Recital of a Fact is not so affecting, as a brisk and lively Conversation, which is the Method that good Writers take to Work upon our Minds. When I read *Ovid*'s Elegies, I sympathize with his Affliction. I traverse Nature Step by Step in the Works of *Lucretius*, and fancy that I hear him unfolding the most hidden Secrets.

Heroes are infinitely obliged to the Poets and Historians, but the latter are seldom beholden to the former. *Achilles* owes Part of his Glory to *Homer*: If there had been no Historians, it would scarce have been known that there was such a Man as *Alexander*. This Prince very well knew how happy a

great

great Monarch, an able General, a famous Conqueror ought to think himself, if he could get an eminent Writer to transmit the principal Events of his Life to Posterity. How many Heroes as famous as *Achilles* and *Ulysses* are doomed to eternal Oblivion, for Want of a *Homer* to immortalise their Actions?

I know not, dear *Brito*, whether thou wilt be of my Opinion, I look upon a truly learned Man as one designed for acting a Part in Life, and after Death, superior to that of many Princes and Monarchs. Who knows any Thing of the Number of Kings that indulged themselves on their Thrones, in effeminate Indolence, and seemed only invested with Royalty to shew that they were incapable to support the Weight of it: Their Names, indeed, are to be found in the Chronological Tables of the Empires: And some Persons who read History, know that in such a Year there reigned such a Prince; but the Rest of the World knows not whether there ever was such a King, or at most but his Name. Whereas when a Man of Learning leaves his Works to Posterity, he becomes more famous from Age to Age, and Time only serves to enhance his Merit; He is made free of all Nations, and his Works are translated into all their Languages: From the West to the East he is known, reverenced, and caressed; Children, Persons of ripe Age, old Men, all know his Works, and take a Pleasure in quoting them; and the Fathers of Families reckon the Collection of the Works of great Men as Part of the Estate which they leave to their Children. It is in these Libraries which are now so common in *Europe*, that a Scholar even lives to see his own Works multiply; he causes the Genius by which he is animated, to be transfused into the several Kingdoms of *Europe*; and at one and the same Instant

be persuades, engages, and captivates the Heart of one Man shut up in his Closet at *Stockholm*, and of another that lives in the Middle of *Paris*.

The Writings of Authors sometimes have that ascendant over the Mind, as to acquire more Esteem and Veneration from their Readers, than their Persons could possibly do. I do not believe that any *Nazarene* would ever have canonized *Socrates*, if he had known him intimately when living. A Doctor of these latter Times was témpted every Time that he read how bravely that Philosopher died, to rank him in the Number of the blessed *Nazarenes*. He owns that he had much ado to forbear calling out, Socrates, *pray for us* *. How many Noblemen, Princes, and Generals, lived in the Time of this great Man, that are intirely unknown to us? And how many are come to our Knowledge, whom we do not think worthy of our Esteem or Notice?

Believe me, dear *Brito*, let Ignorance publish whatsoever it will, Study is the true Road that leads to the latest Posterity†: It is a Way that is

* *Vix tempero quin dicam Sancte Socrates, ora pro nobis.* Erasmus in Colloquiis.

† By Study, said one of the Ancients, the Philosopher becomes more wise; the Warrior more intrepid and more experienced; the Sovereign learns to govern with Equity; and there is not a Man upon Earth, in whatsoever Rank Fortune has placed him, who does not gain new Improvements by the Study of the Sciences. *Desiderabilis eruditio literarum, quæ Naturam laudabilem eximie reddit ornatam. Ibi prudens invenit unde sapientior fiat. Ibi bellator reperit unde animi virtute roboretur. Inde Princeps accipit quemadmodum populos sub æquitate componat. Nec aliqua in mundo potest esse fortuna, quam literarum non augeat gloriosa notitia.* Cassiodor. Var. lib. i. pag. 3.

open

open to the poor as well as the rich Man, to the *Plebeian* as well as the *Patrician*. Virtue and Application are the only Qualifications in the World, to make farther Progress in it than it's Opposites. I laugh when I see some People hope to extend their Fame to Posterity, by going to be knocked on the Head at a Breach. There is not a petty Country Gentleman, but if he once comes to be a Lieutenant of Foot, hopes to transmit his Name to future Generations. He thinks that hereafter the whole World will be a-gog to know whether the Chevalier *de Figeac*, *Cognac*, *Reignac*, &c. died at his Village or in a Trench. No-body has better defined those subaltern Honours of War, and the Condition of a simple Officer than *Racine*. *Agrippina* speaking to *Burrhus*, reproaches him thus for his Ingratitude; *You*, said she, *whom I might have suffered to have grown grey in the obscure Honours of some Legions.*

The Notion which is entertained by the *French* in general, that Posterity will talk of all their Exploits, and the Prepossession conceived by the most insignificant Gentlemen, that they are formed to draw the Eyes of all *Europe* upon them, are Means of which the Government makes a good Handle; there being always People enough resolute to face Danger, Hunger, and Fatigue, solely from an Ambition to rise above the Vulgar; though for one that succeeds in his Projects, there are thirty Thousand that die in the obscure Honours of Legions. But the Example of one is sufficient to encourage and animate all the Rest.

The Chevalier *de Maisin*, whom I have often mentioned to thee, told me a pleasant Story of a Country Gentleman, who had spent the first Years of his Life in the Service; but being at last disgusted by Wounds, Fatigues, and the little Hopes

of his Advancement, he retired to his Village to end his Days in Peace. Nevertheless he still preserved his warlike Temper, and was perpetually talking to his Parson and the Parishioners of his former Atchievements, and of what he would have done moreover, if he had continued in the Service. At last falling sick, and being at the Point of Death, the Curate proposed a certain Ceremony to him that is observed by the *Nazarenes* when they are at the last Extremity, which they think very essential, and consists of a certain Oil with which they rub the Limbs of the Patient. The Officer consented to every Thing; but as the Parson was going to perform his Office, *Doctor*, said he, *since I am so unfortunate as to die in my Bed, after having been in ten Battles and twenty Sieges, please to mitigate my Pains, and do not let me undergo the Ceremony of Burghers: Be so good as to make an Alteration in it; and if I must needs be liquored in order to be saved; I fancy that an Infusion of Gunpowder in Brandy would make an Ointment that would suit better than Oil with my Military Order, and my Rank as a Nobleman.*

Fare thee well, dear *Brito*, and study to live happy and contented.

LETTER XLIX.

From JACOB BRITO, *at* Venice, *to* AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris.

I HAVE been these six Days at *Venice*, than which I never saw a Town that looked more charming. One cannot well avoid being astonished to see a City

a City built in the Middle of the Sea, and as it were founded upon the Water. All the Streets of *Venice* are cut by Canals, so that you may go where you please in Gondola's, which are little covered Boats that serve at *Venice* instead of Coaches and Equipage.

The Government of this Republic is aristocratical; all Affairs being regulated and governed by it's Senate, at the Head of which presides the Doge. Though it is the Senate alone that makes Peace or War, lays on Taxes, &c. yet, to see the grave Pride of the Doge, the Richness of his Cloaths, and the Splendor of his Palace, one would be apt to think him the true Sovereign of *Venice*; but he is only a Phantom that represents the Authority of the Senate, and has often less Credit than another Nobleman. He has but one Vote as a Senator; yet his imaginary Sovereignty gives him a Right to go to all the Courts of Judicature, and to the public Tribunals, where he may give his Verdict in doubtful Cases; but any other Senator has a Right to oppose it.

The Noble *Venetians* are stately and haughty, infatuated with the Dignity of their Rank, and perfect Slaves to it. Their State Policy forbids them to have any Correspendence with Ambassadors, or with People that are attached to them, and very little with Foreigners of a certain Rank; and, were they to act differently, they would not only be suspected, but it would furnish a material Handle to turn them out of their Offices. The Nobles are divided into three Classes; the first, at it's Institution, consisted but of a dozen Families, which were called *Electoral*; but a little after, Four were added; and, in Process of Time, Eight more. The second Class consists of all the Nobles whose Names are written in the golden Book. And the Third of those

those whose Families have been ennobled in the Exigencies of the Republic, on the Payment of an Hundred Thousand Ducats. The latter are not employed in the great Offices; and they act much the same Part at *Venice*, as the Financiers do in *France* and *Piedmont*, who have bought a Right to forget their Parents and their old Ancestors, by the Purchase of a Skin of Parchment.

These new Nobles are nevertheless as haughty as the old Standards; they think themselves equal to the greatest Princes, and expect a Deference and slavish Respect to be paid them by every breathing Creature in the Country. A *Frenchman* walking in the Square of St. *Mark*, happened heedlessly to jostle a noble *Venetian*, who thereupon gravely took him by the Arm, and asked him what Beast he thought the most heavy and unweildy? The *Frenchman* being quite surprised at the Question, and not knowing the Reason why the *Venetian* applied to him rather than to any body else for his Information, paused a while without a Word of Answer. But the *Venetian*, without abating a Jot of his Gravity, putting the same Question to him again, the *Frenchman* answered frankly, that he thought the Elephant the most unweildly Beast. Well then, said the *Venetian*, with a proud Air, take Care for the future, Mr. Elephant, how you jostle a Noble *Venetian*. *Impara Signior Elephante, che non s'impegna un Nobile Veneziano.* Another Nobleman being in a narrow Street, so that he could not pass by Reason of the long Sword of a *Spaniard* that went before him, asked him very gravely, *If he should run over or under him?* *Signor, se cavalca, o si passe sotto?* It would be dangerous to make an Answer to those Jokes which have the Air of Invective; for at *Venice* if a Man should be wanting in the Respect to

a Nobleman,

a Nobleman, he would run himself into a Scrape that he could not easily get out of.

The Scandalous Chronicle says, that in the principal Families one Brother alone marries for all the rest. I believe that this Custom is not so common as is pretended, yet I do not think it is totally disused. The Humour of the *Venetians*, and their Vanity, may be the Occasion of a Conduct so blameable. If in a numerous Family all the Brothers were to marry, the great Number of Children that might survive, would soon impoverish the richest Families. That Grandeur of which the Nobles are such Idolizers, if it be not supported by Wealth, would languish in the second Generation, and hardly keep alive to the Third. For it is at *Venice*, as it is elsewhere, a poor Nobleman is not near so much respected as a rich one.

Devotion is no Hindrance to the Intrigues of the *Venetians*; and it may be affirmed, that if the Brothers in a great many Families had only this Barrier to force, in order to enjoy the Privilege of having but one and the same Woman, the Bar would soon be laid open.

The *Venetians* believe so-so in God, and have much more Faith in St. *Mark* than in the Pope. St. *Mark* has been the Patron and Protector of their City, ever since his Corps was translated thither from *Alexandria*. Before him *Theodore* was their tutelar Saint; but the *Venetians* were too vain to put up with a common Saint, who was of no Service, but at the Beginning of a small Republic. They would have a new Patron answerable to their Fortune, and therefore cashiered their old Protector, and chose a Saint of the first Class, to whose Honour they erected a Temple, which may be looked upon as one of the finest Fabrics in *Europe*. It is full of immense Wealth, and has a vast Revenue.

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The Procurators of St. *Mark* are the Nobles that are intrusted with the Distribution of those Estates, Part of which is applied to the Relief of the Poor. These Procurators have the Prerogative to wear a Ducal Robe, *i. e.* a Gown with long Sleeves, which trail to the Ground.

Notwithstanding the mighty Veneration of the *Venetians* for St. *Mark*, they are not a Jot the better *Nazarenes*, and the chief Men even boast that they have very little Religion. An Ambassador who was sent from the Republic to the King of *Sardinia*, had been desired by a Bishop to talk to some *Piedmontese* that had Relations at *Geneva*, to endeavour to reclaim one of his Nephews, who had abandoned the *Romish* Communion, and was retired to that City. When the Ambassador arrived at *Turin*, he was in no great Haste to perform the Bishop's Commission: But happening to be one Day with the Envoys of *Geneva*, he recollected the Affair, and asked them if they did not know such a Refugee whom he named to them? the *Genoese* having said a great many good Things of him, *I am charmed*, said the Ambassador, *to hear so good a Character of him. His Uncle, the Bishop of* Aquapendente, *desired me to try if I could dissuade him from the Step he has taken; but I am the more surprized that he should leave the Care of his Conversion to me, because such Commissions are scarce ever given to* Venetians.

The Freedom which is enjoyed in this City, has often brought great Men to it, for the Sake of finding Shelter from the Bigotry, of the other *Italians*. *Peter Aretin*, a Native of *Arezzo* in *Tuscany*, so famous for his Satyrs and several other Compositions, came to settle at *Venice* in the Beginning of the sixteenth Century, in order to enjoy the Privilege of writing freely. The *Nazarene* Pontiffs condemned his Writings, and especially

ly his *Dialogues*, his *Letters*, and his *Arguments*; nevertheless they were at the same Time publicly printed at *Venice*, and several other Editions of them published afterwards under the Nose of the Magistrates.

The *Venetians* are, in the general, neither so lively nor so quick of Invention as some People of *Italy*, but their Slowness is owing to the Reflexions which they make upon the Things that they have a Mind to undertake. They examine an Affair maturely before they enter upon it, and therefore generally bring it to a happy Issue. They are magnificent, artful, and very discreet; but their Women are proud and insolent; and as to their Virtues, Chastity is seldom one of the Number. The Ladies at *Venice* are so tender-hearted, that their Discretion is not Proof against Opportunity. The Citizens follow their Example. As to the Wives of the Mechanics and the common People, Gallantry with them is a public Trade, which has it's particular Rules and Maxims. There is not above one in ten of those common Prostitutes, but their own Mothers or Aunts make the Bargain for them, and settle the Price of their Virginity, by a Bargain made a long Time beforehand, in order to deliver them when they come to such an Age, on the Payment of a hundred or two hundred Ducats, *in order*, say they, *That they may have wherewithal to marry*. A Mother who had covenanted with a Foreigner to give him her Daughter for two hundred Ducats, perceiving that he deferred taking her from Time to Time, on pretence that she was not yet ripe, and that she had not yet enough of Bubby, she was so tired out with all his Put-offs, that she went one Day to him to know his final Resolution; *Sir*, said she, *you must be so good as to take a speedy Resolution; for the Reverend Father, Preacher of one of the chief Convents in*

Venice

Venice (whose Name she mentioned) *is upon Treaty for her, and has already made a very handsome Offer.* The Foreigner, who perhaps was very glad to get quit of his Promise, and thought much of two hundred Ducats that he was to deposit for her, agreed that the Reverend Father should strike the Bargain, which he accordingly concluded in Form, not thinking the Fruit so green as the Gentleman did.

Besides these private Gallantries, there is an astonishing Number of Courtezans at *Venice*, who have their full Liberty, and often gain great Credit among the Populace. They go into the Nuns Convents, to visit the Sisters of those with whom they have an Intrigue, and receive a great many Caresses from them, which are always followed with some Presents, consisting of Sweet-meats, and Agnus Dei's; for the *Venetian* Courtezans are not only as numerous, but as devout as those at *Rome*. They fast on *Saturdays*, have a great Veneration for some She-Saint or other, to whose Protection they commit themselves, and carry on their Occupation very devoutly.

There is Nothing that can be so amusing to a Philosopher, or indeed every Man that exercises his Reason, as to take a Walk about nine o'Clock in the Evening in the Street *la Serena* at *Rome*: There you shall see two hundred Women sitting at their Doors, waiting patiently for their good Luck. When a Man is disposed to make a Purchase, which he is always sure to repent of, he gives a Handkerchief to the Beauty whom he has a Mind to single out from the Rest, and she conducts the new Sultan into her Apartment. The Chambers of these Priestesses of *Venus* are all much alike, being on the first Floor even with the Street. All their Furniture is a Bed with white Curtains, a Table,

Table, three Wooden Chairs, and an Image of some *Madona*, with a Lamp burning before it, which serves also to light the Room. Before Matters are pushed to a certain Point, a Curtain is drawn before the Image of the *Madona*, that she may not perceive what passes. When all is over, the Curtain is opened again; and thus the Picture is covered and uncovered ten Times a-day, if the Mistress of the House has but as many different Intrigues.

To what Lengths do some People's Conceits carry them, and to what Irregularities do they think to reconcile Religion!

Fare thee well, dear *Monceca*, and live content and happy.

LETTER L.

From AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris, *to* JACOB BRITO, *at* Venice.

Dear BRITO,

I HAVE just escaped one of the greatest Dangers that I ever ran in my whole Life. I had like to have fallen in Love, and in Love too with a young Lady that was amiable, but fickle; witty, but whimsical; engaging, but proud and haughty. Consider to what a Pass I should have been reduced, if I had fallen a Slave to that dangerous Beauty! But a Heart like mine could not be reconciled to the Method of courting a *Paris* Lady. Being accustomed to the Simplicity and Sincerity of our *Greek* Women, I could not bear the Coquettery and Intrigue of the *French*. A Man must be born in their Country, that

that can brook such extraordinary Behaviour. In general the *Nazarenes* only think they are in Love; and I dare say that in *France*, *Italy*, *Germany*, *England*, and in *Spain* too, they have no Notion of true Love: It is a Passion only understood in *Asia*, where it reigns with Delicacy, and seems to agree with Reason.

I know not whether thou didst ever reflect on the various Characters of the *Nazarene* Lovers.

The *Frenchman* personates a much more passionate Lover than he is in reality: Being a Coquet in his Temper, light, fickle, and hot-headed by Nature, he dances, he capers, he whistles, sings, and plays the Fool with his Mistress. If she gives him a favourable Hearing, he soon abandons her. If she is cruel, he does not value it. A Stanza or two of a Song against the Fair-one, rewards him for his lost Labour; and he is ready to act the same Part with the next Woman, that he did with her that was insensible of his Addresses. Nothing can fix his Inconstancy; his Love is palled by Enjoyment, and disgusted by Hardheartedness.

The *Italian*, firm in his Projects, stable in his Resolution, attacks a Heart as a General of an Army does a Town; he disposes his Batteries, fortifies himself with all the Helps of Art, endeavours to block up the Fair-one's House, and to hinder his Rivals from entering; he maintains secret Correspondences in the Place, engages the Chambermaid or some other Domestic in his Interest. If he succeeds in his Attack, he confines his Mistress for the Rest of her Life; and to reward her for her Love, he robs her of her Liberty. If he is forced to raise the Siege, he takes Revenge not only on his Rivals by endeavouring to poison them, but also on the Object of his Love, which becomes that of his Hatred, and he ruins her Reputation by the basest Calumnies.

The

The *Englishman* only loves out of Pride; he has too great a Conceit of his own Perfections to think himself obliged to any Woman for liking him. If he is beloved, he fancies that he deserves it: If he is not, it does not at all affect him, because he expects to find Women enough in the World that will be fond of him. He measures his Fortune by her Wealth, and judges of a Heart by the Guineas it costs him to gain it.

The *German* is phlegmatic, and not easily affected; his dull, cold, circumspect, and pensive Temperament contributes to his Insensibility; for he is scarce ever known to be in Love, but when he is cheared by the Favours of *Bacchus*. His Passion is kindled by the Wine, and evaporates with it's Fumes. If sometimes he puts a Force upon his natural Constitution, he quickly returns to his former Phlegm; and Love, with the *Germans*, is as cold as the Flakes of Northern Ice.

The proud *Spaniard* pretends to love to Distraction; he puts himself into an Agony, torments himself, and sighs by Day in the Churches, and by Night under his Mistress's Windows, where he plays upon the Guitar all the Carnival-Time, and lashes himself devoutly in *Lent* *. It is all for the Sake of Love. He interests the very Saints in his Amours, and causes Collects to be sung to St. *Francis* and St. *Anthony*, to engage them to turn his Mistress's Heart. If he has not Help from Heaven, he has Recourse to Hell; he consults Diviners, Sorcerers, and Magi-

* It is the Custom in *Spain* to make Processions in the Night during the Holy Week. There is a great Number of People who whip themselves in the Streets by Way of Penance; and when they come under their Mistress's Windows, they there take their Station, and give themselves a hundred Lashes to her Honour and Glory.

cians,

cians, and Love banishes all Thoughts of the Inquisition out of his Mind. Is he happy? He forgets his Care and Pains, and, what is more, his Love; and often stabs the Person to the Heart whom he adored, but Vanity has more Share in his Guilt than Jealousy.

In *Asia*, Love is a gentle settled Passion, which does not set Men a raving, but gives them a Concern that is amiable; they are not at so much Pains and Fatigue to purchase the Favour of the Fair on the one Hand, and on the other their Appetites are not palled with Enjoyment. They do not commit so many Follies for the Sake of the Women, as they do in *France*, but then they love them more sincerely.

In the *Nazarene* Countries, the Men are the principal Cause that the Fair Sex is no better; for they set them daily Examples of Capriciousness, Inconstancy, Treachery, and Dishonesty. A Woman who sees her Husband commit Adultry, and look upon it as no more than a Piece of Gallantry, thinks she has a Right to indulge the same Inclination. A young Lady, whom her Lover abandons, after making a thousand Vows, and the most solemn Promises, imagines that to be false and perjured are no very great Crimes, since they do not stain her Lover's Reputation.

I tremble, dear *Brito*, when I think what a Risk I ran; I was upon the very Brink of the Precipice; I actually felt those Motions in my Heart, the Consequences of which are so pernicious in this Country: My Eyes roved with Pleasure over the enchanting Features of the fair Lady to whom I payed a secret Homage. In short, I was just ready to kiss my Chain, when Reflexion forced me from the Misfortunes into which I was plunging: I considered to what Uneasiness I was going to abandon myself, and in

in Spite of myself resolved no more to see my lovely Charmer, whose Absence has quite made Way for the Return of my Reason. When I say this, I would not have it thought that I pride myself in the Character of being Insensible, for there is no-body but at some Time or other has felt the Darts of Love; but if I must be in Love, I am willing to take Care that my Passions may prove a Blessing to me, and not a Torture.

I laugh at those Philosophers who flatter themselves with the vain Conceit, that they are the better Men because they were never in Love. I should like as well to hear a Man boast that he was always stupid; for in short, dear *Brita*, a Tenderness for the Fair Sex is the noblest Present that we have received from Heaven: It is a Delicacy in Sentiments that distinguishes us from the Rest of Animals, and the finest Inventions are owing to a strong Desire to please. It was an ingenious female Lover that invented Sculpture and Drawing; and they say, it was Love that gave the first Idea of Writing. If we inquire into the most considerable Events, we shall find the Source of them in Love. *Europe* is obliged to this Passion for most of it's Amusements; the Invention of all Recreations being solely to please the Fair Sex. *The Man in low Life makes his Court to his Sweetheart by regaling her with Wine, Sweetmeats, and Dainties. The Noble and the Rich divert theirs with Plays, Masquerades, Balls, Airings, and Journeys into the Country.* Were it not for Love, every Thing in Nature would languish, for it is the Soul of the World, and the Harmony of the Universe. Heaven gave to Man, at his Creation, that Biass which inclines him to Women; and the Fondness we have for them, is a Present from the Deity. We ought not to blush at our being in Love, since we do but therein conform to the Impression

pressions of Nature, which have Nothing criminal, unless when they are corrupted by our Vices and Debauchery.

It seems as if the *Nazarenes* were not capable of loving any Woman but those whom they cannot court, without incurring Guilt. The *French* especially maintain, that Marriage and Enjoyment are the Tomb of Love, and this Passion does not appear amiable to them if it be not guilty. To this Purpose they tell a pleasant Story, for the Truth of which I will not be answerable, though it is inserted in the Works of an Historian of great Authority *. It is commonly said in *France* among the Debauchees, that the Conclusion of the Civil Wars in that Kingdom, which they had like to have entirely destroyed at the Beginning of the Reign of *Henry* IV. was owing to two or three Harlots. The Duke *de Maine*, who was Head of the League against that Monarch, was a Man of a slow dilatory Temper, which gave great Encouragement to the bold Enterprizes of his Enemies. In the Height of his Rebellion, having the Misfortune to go with four or five of his Friends to the *Hotel de Carnavelet, he there debauched himself with some Ladies of Pleasure, and was so fond of them, that he had Need to have kept his Chamber for several Days* †. But the Affairs of his Party being in such a Situation, that he could only take *palliative Remedies, the Poison lurked in his Body, and rendered him still more sluggish, sullen, and chagrin, which lessened the Vigour of his Party*. And the said Duke, not long after this Adventure, being weary and quite jaded with the Toils of War, began to lend an Ear to Proposals of Peace.

* *Mezeray.*

† *Mezeray's* Chronol. Abridgm. *Anno* 1589.

If

If the ſame Accident had happened to *Henry* IV. the Popiſh Hiſtorians of his Time, who were great Admirers of Prodigies, would not have failed to have tranſmitted this Intrigue of the three Whores to Poſterity, as a Miracle wrought in Favour of the League. But as it happened to the Head of the Holy Confederacy, they have left it in profound Oblivion.

This Story is a very evident Proof of the Incontinency and Lewdneſs of the *Nazarenes*; they condemn the Plurality of Wives among the *Turks*, while they ruin their Health and Subſtance with Harlots, whom they call *Creatures formed to alleviate the Troubles and Cares of human Life*. All the rich People keep them in Pay; thoſe are in beſt Keeping that belong to the Farmers-General, or Officers of the Revenue, from whom they ſqueeze conſiderable Sums, to the great Impoveriſhment of the Commonality, the Widows and the Orphans. The Ladies, whoſe Gallants are landed Men, generally live up to the Height of what they get, indulge themſelves in good Cheer for twenty Years, keep grand Equipages, and ſeveral Domeſtics, and when they begin to grow old, they find themſelves as poor as they were before, all their Gains having been laid out in Cloaths, Lace, *Champaign* Wine, and Ribbands. Theſe Ladies who have rich Clergymen for their Gallants, fare ſomewhat better at laſt, for they ſtill make a Shift to live under the Protection of the Altar, even when they are caſhiered and turned out of Pay.

Fare thee well, dear *Brito*; mayeſt thou proſper in thy Affairs, and marry a chaſte and faithful Woman, who may be the Glory of *Iſrael*, and from whom that Lamp may riſe, which is to illuminate the Nations.

LETTER LI.

From AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris, *to* ISAAC ONIS, *a Rabbi, at* Constantinople.

I LONG to hear from thee, and till I do shall always be uneasy. I cannot send thee the Books that are coming from *Holland*, till thou art arrived in *Egypt*; nor shall I have them at *Paris* these six Weeks. By the Letters I have received from *Moses Rodrigo*, I hope thou wilt have Reason to be satisfied. He tells me that he has made it his Business to pick out the best of History: I look upon good Books of that Kind, as inestimable Treasure; their Scarcity makes them the more valuable, for ten Centuries scarce produce four or five Historians that approach to Perfection.

In some of my former Letters I observed to thee how obscure History was in the first Ages, and the Difficulty of coming at the Truth of Times so far back: And when we come down to later Times, we find another Perplexity altogether as bad. The too great Number of Historians, and the Ignorance and Incapacity of most of them, throw the Mind into Confusion, and are very prejudicial to that Clearness and Truth, that ought to be expected in a regular Disposition of the Facts, with which one would wish to enrich the Understanding, as a Repositary to be made Use of upon Occasion by the Help of the Memory. The indigested Heap of a thousand Impertinences with which the Historians stuff their Works, enervates the Mind of the Reader; and the

great

great Number of Facts, either false or insignificant, carries away that Attention which only ought to be given to those that are of sufficient Importance to ingross it.

The ancient *Greek* and *Latin* Historians that are remaining to this Day, have been refined by Time. When I say *refined*, I do not intend it of their Works, of which we have unhappily lost considerable Fragments; but I mean that they are the only Works come to our Hands which have not suffered Extinction, nor fallen into that Oblivion, the Fate of a great many indifferent Writers which there must have been in their Time. For all Ages have abounded with bad Authors, whose Writings were never transmitted to their Posterity: On the other Hand, we see that the Works of the Ancients which have lived to this Day, are the same which were preferred before all the others both in *Athens* and in old *Rome*.

The Reason for the Preservation of a good Book preferable to an indifferent or a bad one, is so plain that it needs little Argument to prove it. We are as careful to keep what is valuable, as we are careless to preserve what we slight. The *Greek* and *Roman* Historians that are preserved to our Time, are precious Deposits which twenty Ages have transmitted to us, that we might transmit them with the same Care to our latest Posterity.

A thousand Years hence our Childrens' Children will have none but the best of our Historians, without being plagued by any bad ones, which for the Satisfaction of the World, will be condemned in the mean Time to Destruction by Moths, Dust, and Chandlers' Shops. The illustrious *Thuanus* will live to the latest Times; and *Mezeray*, with some other Historians, though not quite so perfect as the former, will also share the Esteem of Posterity. But how

many Writers will perish successively one after another? How many are there now half-begotten Brats, that are dead as soon as born? How many have been smothered in the Cradle? Alas! who knows any Thing now of a hundred Books that were written only twenty Years ago? Where is the Man who is for cultivating a good Taste, and cautious of giving his Attention to insipid Stuff, told with an Emphasis, and amplified with a Parcel of *impertinent Nothings*, that will venture to dip into *Larrey*'s pretended History of *the Seven Wise Men*, augmented by another Author of *Remarks*, which are still worse than the Body of the Work, and have Nothing to recommend them but the being as short as they are insignificant? The History of *Lewis* XIV. and that of *William* III *, written by the same Author, have also seen their last Day; and our Grandchildren will not be put to the trouble of endeavouring to render that Writer consistent with himself, who makes two Heroes, and two very indifferent Princes alternately, of those two Monarchs. In the History of *Lewis* XIV. *William* III. is a very ordinary Character; and in the History of *William* III. the Hero *Lewis* XIV. is so far eclipsed in his Merit that he becomes quite another Man. Our Grandchildren, I say, will be informed of such Actions of those Monarchs as really shewed them to be great Men, by reading the Works of some good Writer, who will preserve the Decency due to History, and the Regard which is challenged by Truth.

I will not trouble thee, dear *Isaac*, with a Detail of all the Books that are every Day spawned, and turned to waste Paper. I need only mention three, *viz.* 1. *The History of the Negociations of the Peace of* Nimeguen, which is an ill-digested Narrative,

* In the History of *England*.

with

with an insipid Stile, and an irregular ill-conducted Series of Reflexions in the most common Class of Politics, and of Facts told an hundred Times before. 2. *The Present State of the United Provinces*; a sad untimely misshapen Production, which owes it's hasty Birth to the Impatience of it's Author to forestall another who was writing on the same Subject. 3. *The History of* Poland, *in the Reign of* Augustus II. an insipid Collection from Gazettes, swelled with a tedious Number of Pieces, and written in such a low creeping Stile as is agreeable to the Irregularity and Inaccuracy of the Author in the Disposition of his Facts.

There are many others of this Sort, which scarce do any Harm to Literature and the Sciences, because of the little Vend there is of them; but the Case is different with Respect to the Works of certain Authors, which are very pernicious in the Republic of Letters, and very likely to corrupt the Reader's Taste. These seem covered with a specious Veil, and to have an excellent Foundation, but then the Superstructure is all bad. These Writers are the *Continuers* of *Histories* written by some Men of Eminence, with whose Countenance they impose upon the Public, and as one may say, spunge upon a Reputation to which they have no Manner of Right. But it is no long Duration; for when their Works are considered with any Care, and those new Tomes which thus venture abroad are compared with the former, they are soon looked upon as spurious Brats, that affect to be honoured with the Name of a *Father* to whom they do not belong. Such are the *Continuers* of *Josephus*, *Grotius*, *Mezeray*, *Puffendorf*, *Bossuet*, *Rapin de Thoyras*, and several others.

The Credit which good Books have established with the Public would not be so encouraging to

those who continue them, if they considered what dangerous Rivals they are always sure to stand with. A moderate Diamond makes a bad Figure joined with a fine Brilliant; but when alone, it is much more sparkling, and seems less defective. Thus the Continuation of *Fleury's Ecclesiastical History* would be a fine Piece, if it were not obscured by the Beauty of the first Part; and the last Volumes of *Don Quixote* would please well enough, if the others had not been published before.

It actually requires more Imagination, and a greater Vivacity of Genius to continue a Work, than the first Author had: For the latter had Nothing to do but to pursue his Ideas naturally as they arose; whereas he that comes after him is under such a Necessity of conforming to him, that he can but here and there make Use of his own Imagination, being obliged to submit to the Ideas of him whose Work he continues, if he has a Mind that it should not appear to be two different Pieces that have little Connection with one another.

The great Number of indifferent, and indeed bad, Writers, is a Hindrance to the Advancement of the Study of History. It should be one of the first Cares of him who applies to it, to be careful in the Choice of the Books in which he hopes to come at the exact Knowledge of the principal Facts: He must be cautious of trusting to Authors who have wrote with Partiality, to such as had it not in their Power to be Masters of the Subject they treat of, and to those that wrote meerly for sordid Gain. If he confines himself only to the Reading of Historians that have not been sullied and infected with these Blemishes, he will indeed have but a small Number of Writers to peruse; but then he will learn more from their single Works,

Works, than from the immense Collection of others, which will only furnish him with false Ideas instead of those he would derive from good Authors, who, if they communicated but a certain Number of Facts to him, would however supply him with those that were true, and ranged and distributed in due Order and Method.

To learn History from an Author devoted to a Party, is the same Thing as to expect to know the Merits of a Cause depending between Plaintiff and Defendant, by hearing the Council of one Side only. For a Man to apply himself to the Reading of an ignorant Historian, or one who is but indifferently acquainted with what he writes; to chuse such a one to conduct us to the Knowledge of the Truth of the Facts with which we want to be acquainted, is the same Thing as giving the Preference to a blind Man to guide us in a dark Way. For a Man to found his Belief upon the Authority of one who writes for Hire, and has such a fixed Price for his Praise, is to seek for Truth in Panegyric.

The famous *Gregorio Leti* was of *Machiavel*'s Opinion, that an Historian ought to be of no *Religion* nor *Country*; I much rather think he should have said, he ought to have neither *Country* nor *Cash*. For as to Religion, besides the Impiety there is in that Sentiment, it does not lay the Truth under a Necessity of being disguised. *De Thou* was a *Nazarene* Papist, and yet as much esteemed by the *Nazarene* Protestants, as by those of his own Communion. I know very well that in all Religions there is a Number of Zealots, who cannot bear to hear those of their own Faith found Fault with, or the Virtues of such as they think in an Error commended. But an Historian does not write for Persons eat up with Prejudices, vile Slaves to their false Devotion. These may suck Chimæras enough from the Books

written by the Monks or Prelates of *Italy*, in whose Works they will find a Chain of Invectives against illustrious Persons, who, while living, merited the Esteem of the whole World.

Almost all the *Nazarene* Popish Writers are subject to be carried away by their Passions, and to worry in Pieces all that oppose them, without any Regard to Truth. They think they have sufficient Authority from certain ancient Doctors of theirs, called the *Fathers*; who were Men that vented their Invectives against all without Distinction that were not of their own Opinion, and respected neither Rank nor Virtue, but all was alike to them. If Credit may be given to their Works, what a horrid Monster must Posterity think the Emperor *Julian* was, whom they called an *Apostate*, though he was guilty of no other Crime than having quitted their Religion *. For he was a chaste, sober, just Prince, and as brave and as elo-

* No Body has better defended *Julian* against the Calumnies of the Fathers, than *Mothè le Vayer*: 'Do not we know, *says he in one Part of that Prince's Elogium*, that the great Applause wherewith——*Jovian* was received by all the Militia, when he was proclaimed Emperor, only proceeded from the Resemblance of his Name to that of *Julian*, from which it differed only in a Letter or two? Now, it is certain that a great Part of that Militia was Christian, as is plain from the Choice they made of a Prince of our Religion. From whence therefore could proceed so great a Testimony of Affection to the Memory of an Idolater, a Persecutor of the Believers, if we do not attribute it to those shining, and truly Imperial Virtues, which did not fail to make him beloved and esteemed.' *Le Mothè le Vayer* of the Virtue of the Pagans, in his Works, Tom. i. Pa. 696 of the Edition in Folio.

quent

quent as *Cæsar*. Judge then what Certainty the *Nazarenes* have of the greatest Part of past Transactions, and especially of those with which their Religion is connected.

There is also, dear *Isaac*, another Sort of Books which is pernicious in the Study of History. They are such as only furnish obscure Ideas, and are of no Service to our Understanding: To read them is to lose Time which may be employed to a much better Purpose. They commonly give important Titles to such Writings, and that is all the Book is good for. I have just now read a Book which may be ranked in this Class; it is *The Introduction to the History of* Asia, Africa, *and* America, *by* Bruzen la Martiniere; a Compilation of certain Facts which all the World knew before, and confounded together without any proper Disposition, a Work in which there is Nothing well digested, Nothing new, Nothing truly instructive, and written in a poor barren Stile. This is the Character of that Book: The Title strikes the Reader's Attention at first, but really the Author has made so little Improvement of *Puffendorf*'s Idea, that he might as well have let it alone.

Fare well, dear *Isacc*, let me hear from thee; and may the God of our Fathers crown thee with Prosperity.

LETTER LII.

From JACOB BRITO, *at* Venice, *to* AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris.

I AM still endeavouring to inform myself of the Manners of the People: I find a Pleasure in comparing the Genius and Customs of the several Nations through which I travel. The *Venetians* are not like the other *Italians*, superstitiously devoted to the Sentiments of the Priests and Fryars. They make Use of their Reason, and taking Advantage of that Lamp of Nature, which they have received from Heaven to be a Light to their Conduct, their Minds are not fettered by that Bigotry which renders Men lazy, and effeminate. In my Travels in *Italy*, I have perceived that the People there are more or less timorous and degenerate, according as they are more or less subject to the Monks, whose low slavish Ideas debase the Minds of those that imitate or associate with them.

This first Reflexion leads me to make a Second upon the *Nazarene* Religion. It cannot be disputed that many of it's Professors are brave and valiant, yet it seems to be a Religion proper only for Cowards; for their Doctors inspire them with a Contempt of Injuries and Poverty, and command them even to love their Enemies, and those that persecute them: Precepts that are directly contrary to the Notions of Honour, which requires that a notable Revenge should be taken for an Affront that is received in Public.

If

If instead of the *Roman* Legions *Julius Cæsar* had taken the Field with two hundred thousand Men that had counted their Beads in the Morning, celebrated their Vespers in the Evening, and who, without retaliating Injuries, had born them with the Patience and Tranquility of a *Stoic*, or rather of a *Nazarene*, as they call themselves; I very much doubt whether that *Roman* would have ever conquered a single Village of the *Gauls*. The most that he could have expected from such devout Soldiers, was the Stand they would have made for their Country and their God, for whom they would have braved Death itself. But there must be something more than this to form good Troops. Whoever expects Success in the military Profession, must do all the Mischief he can to his Enemy, *must prevent him, surprize him, put him to the Sword, burn his Magazines, starve him, plunder him*, and all these Feats must be performed with Dispatch; without giving Time for consulting Casuists to know whether it is lawful upon such Occasion either to kill or burn. An Army would make little Progress, if before it resolved to give Battle, a supreme Council of Divines was to be assembled, to know whether it was lawful or not to meet the Enemy, or to avoid him. If I was the General of an Army, I should rather chuse to be obliged to consult the Entrails of Victims, or the Sacred Chicken after the Manner of the Ancients. I should come off like an illustrious *Roman*, by causing them to be drowned if they would not eat, to the End that they might drink more at their Ease, and that the Augury might be the more favourable. But the Divines would not be so easy to manage as Chicken; they would form a thousand Disputes among themselves, of which there would be no End, and the Enemy would beat the religious Army ten

Times before the Preliminaries were settled for deciding the Case of Conscience in Question. Surely the Command of such an Army would never have been accepted by the Marshal *de Biron*, who broke a Captain whom he had Nothing to reproach with but his taking some Precaution against the Prosecution of a Solicitor-General. *Are you of them*, said he to the Captain, *that have such a Dread of Justice? I break you: You shall never serve me more: For every Soldier that is afraid of a Pen, is afraid of a Sword.* What dost think, dear *Menceca*, this Duke would have done to a Soldier or an Officer, that should have desired Time to take Advice of his Spiritual Director before he took the Field? It is my Opinion he would have treated him as a Sacred Chick.

The *Nazarenes* themselves agree that their Conduct and their Actions in the Point of War are intirely contrary to the Spirit of their Religion: But they throw the Blame of all the Harm they are capable of doing, upon those who being at the Head of Government, ought never to engage the Subjects in any Wars but what are just. This first Principle being laid down, they divest themselves of all other Scruples, and *plunder*, *rob*, *kill*, *massacre*, *burn*, *&c.* and all without consulting the Divines, not even the Almoners or Chaplains, of whom there are almost as many in their Armies as there are Sutlers. For the Fryars too have some small Credit with the *Nazarene* Soldiers, and they are so crafty that they even reap some Advantages from People that have the least Esteem for them. Nevertheless they have no Authority at *Venice*; for the Senate are so jealous of their Power that they would put all the Monks in their Dominions to Death, if they offered to cabal and form Parties. Nay, for less than this, they would

hang

hang up the Superior of the chief Convent of *Venice*, who if he did but talk a little too freely of Government, his Affair would soon be dispatched. For in this Country the Ministry must be treated with as much Respect as there is Liberty for all the Rest: Nay, it is almost as dangerous to commend as to censure them; for the *Venetians* will have neither Good nor Ill said of their Administration; and all Discussions upon this Head are what they hate. They expect that their Government should be revered as the *Athenians* revered the unknown God *, to whom, though they erected an Altar, yet they contented themselves with honouring him in Silence, without speaking of his Qualities or his Attributes.

As a *Genoese* Carver was one Day at work in a Church of the *Nazarene* Fryars † who had sent for him from *Venice* for that Purpose, two *French* Gentlemen newly arrived there, went to take a View of his Works, and after commending the Beauty of them, they fell by Degrees into Conversation with him about the Government of the Republic; when these *Frenchmen*, according to the laudable Custom of some of their Countrymen, which is, never to approve of any Thing among Foreigners, launched out into Invectives against the Senate and the Republic, and to the Senators they gave the Nick-name of *Pantalons*, or *Buffoons*, more than once. The poor *Genoese* pleaded for the *Venetians* to the best of his Power; but he had a hard Match to cope with; they were two to one, and the *Frenchman* gave him no Quarter. The very next Day after this Conversation, the poor *Genoese* was sent for by the Council of State: He appeared with trembling before the Senators, not knowing

* *Deo ignoto.* † The Jesuits.

what

what he was accuſed of, and little thinking of the *Frenchmen* whom he had ſeen the Day before. When he came into the Council-room he was aſked, If he had any Acquaintance with the two Perſons that he diſcourſed with about the Government of the Republic? This made him quake the more; and he anſwered with quivering Lips, that he thought he had ſaid Nothing but what was for the Advantage and Honour of the Senate. Upon this he was ordered to go into an adjacant Room where he immediately caſt his Eyes upon the two *Frenchmen* dead and hanged to the Cieling. He then thought he had not an Hour more to live; but being carried back before the Senators, he that was the Preſident ſaid to him gravely, *Hold your Peace another Time, Friend; our Republic has no Need of an Advocate of your Claſs.* And then he was ſent about his Buſineſs. But the poor *Genoeſe* was in ſuch a Conſternation and Terror at what he had ſeen, that he did not ſo much as return to take his Leave of the Monks for whom he had been at work, but went inſtantly from *Venice*, and ſwore heartily he would never go thither again.

Though the State Inquiſition is ſo terrible in this Country, yet the Church Inquiſition has no Power here. This Tribunal, which the *Nazarenes* call the *Holy Office*, is compoſed of a Father Inquiſitor, of the Pope's Nuncio reſiding at *Venice*, of the Patriarch of the City, who is a Noble *Venetian*, and of two other Noblemen who are choſen out of the principal Senators, and without whoſe Preſence all Proceedings are null and void. The Eſtates of thoſe whom the Inquiſition condemns, fall to their Heirs; and therefore the Fryars at *Venice* have neither the Power of tyrannizing over the People, nor that of ſeizing their Eſtates; nor are their Books, in what Manner ſoever they are written,

written, and whatsoever Subject they treat of, within the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction. The Republic alone can take Cognizance of what relates to Printing; therefore at *Venice* every one is at Liberty to publish what he thinks fit, provided the Republic is out of the Question. The principal Books of all Religions have been printed in this City. The *Jews* have published an Edition of the Talmud there. *Leo of Modena*, and several others, have published their Works there; and there the *Turks* have also printed their Alcoran. But what is more surprizing among the *Nazarenes*, is, that Books have been published there against the Fryars, Priests, and even the sovereign Pontiffs *; and that these Works have likewise been authorized by the Magistrates, and received too with Applause.

The *Venetians* make their Religion truckle to their Politics; they adapt their Creed to the public Welfare, and their Faith to the Times and Circumstances. They permit the University of *Padua* to confer the Doctor's Degree, without demanding the Confession of the Faith injoined by the Pontiffs, from those who are admitted. Consequently the Body of the *Venetian* Doctors is a Medley of *Nazarene* Papists, *Nazarene* Schismatics, *Nazarene* Writers, *Jews* and *Turks* too, if any Cadi of *Constantinople* has a Fancy to take the Degree of a Doctor: For the Republic is of Opinion that the Paths which lead to the Sciences ought to be open to all Men, and that it is cruel to barricade them upon the vain Pretext of Religion; which ought not to excuse us from the Obligations that are necessary for the Peace and Happiness of Society.

* Hist. of the Council of *Trent*, by Father *Paul*, &c.

The

The *Venetians* are so zealous to procure the Comforts and Accomodations of Life for all Men in general, that they extend their Precaution a little too far as to what they think must conduce to their Benefit. Some Years ago the Number of Courtezans being extremely diminished, the Republic sent for a great many from Foreign Parts. Signior *Dogliono*, who has wrote a Treatise of the Remarkables of *Venice*, highly extols the Wisdom of the Senate, who, by making Provision for the Necessities of human Frailty, secured the Honour of sober modest Women, whose Virtue was liable to the Surprize of a thousand Snares. I defy the Precaution of Magistrates, whose Office it is to take Care of the public Good, to extend farther than to think how to gratify the Desires of Libertines, and to dissipate the Fears of jealous Husbands; this is a Thing of which none but the *Venetians* are capable. In Truth (begging *Doglioni*'s Pardon) I do not think this Action so great and commendable as he does; and in order to prevent the Insults of Libertines upon honest Women, I think it would have been right to take the same Method as *Sixtus* V. did, when he banished the Whores from *Rome*. This Pontiff punished Vice severely, and kept the Rakes and Vagabonds in awe. But the *Venetians*' Philosophy is better natured; they are like certain *German* Prelates, who formerly permitted the Priests and Fryars of their Dioceses to have Concubines, on the Payment of a certain annual Tribute *. The Republic does the very same Thing, and makes a Profit by the Sins of the Harlots, which bring in above a hundred thousand Sequins a Year into the public Treasure.

Fare thee well, dear *Monceca*, and prosper in all thy Undertakings.

* See the *Centum Gravamina apud Wolffum. Lectionum Memorabil.* vol. ii. p. 223.

LET-

LETTER LIII.

From ISAAC ONIS, *a Caraite, at* Smyrna, *formerly a Rabbi, at* Constantinople, *to* AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris.

IT is now a Week, dear *Monceca*, since I left the Imperial City for good and all, and am come away, Thanks be to the God of our Fathers, without any Disaster befalling me. My *quandum* Brethren knew nothing of the Reason of my Departure; I made them believe that I was going to *Smyrna* upon Business. In this City I am now happily arrived, and from thence I purpose to set out shortly for *Cairo*.

I was not sorry to quit the Imperial City, where my Residence was not so pleasant as thou didst imagine. A thousand Objects were eternally in my View there, which were shocking to my Sense and Reason. I could not make Use of my Philosophy in a Country so disturbed, where Wickedness, Rebellion, Murder, Avarice, and Cruelty, were perpetually offending my Mind. I look upon the *Ottoman* Empire as Shambles, where the Sultans and Viziers are the Butchers that slay and sacrafice Persons of every Rank and Condition to their Lewdness. The despotic Power with which the Grand Signiors are invested, and that which they grant to their Viziers, are Sources of crying Injustice. The *Ottoman* Court is like the Tribunal of the Inquisition, where Wealth or Virtue is sure to be condemned. Every Part of the Seraglio inspires Fear and Terror.

Death

Death seems to be always at the Heels of such as approach the Sultans; and it looks as if those Princes only promoted them, that their Fall might be the more remarkable.

The Entrance of the Palaces of the Sovereigns is commonly adorned with Columns of Marble, and Pieces of Sculpture, worthy of Royal Grandeur. But as soon as one enters the Gates of that fatal Palace the Seraglio, one sees nothing but the Heads of two or three hundred Bashas, or other unfortunate Men nailed up, whose Fate inspires one with Horror. The Inside of it is as sad as the Outside: Every Part of it looks dreadful; and be a Person ever so innocent, he is never sure that he shall not suffer Death or Punishment. In the Seraglio it may be said, that when a Man rises in the Morning, he does not know whether he shall live till Night; for the smallest Fault, the least Heedlessness, is often punished with Death.

The Imperial City is not a Jot more agreeable than the Court, for one is perpetually alarmed with Accounts of the Banishment or Death of the most considerable Citizens. Every new Grand Vizier sacrifices a certain Number of Victims to his Avarice, as soon as he attains to that high Station. *Constantinople* is a Sheepfold, where the Flocks are only fattened for the Slaughter. The *Jews* and *Greeks* are the most exposed to these Acts of Violence. They pay dear for the Advantage of exercising their Religion, for they are perpetually squeezed and robbed of the Fruit of their Labour and Pains without Pity. Our unfortunate Nation is incessantly tormented at *Constantinople*: For in a State of Calm and Tranquility, we are a Prey to the Avarice of the Officers of the *Porte*; and in the Times of Disturbance and Mutiny, we are the Sport of an insolent

insolent Militia, whose Covetousness is seldom to be satisfied without our Wealth. We seem to have more Liberty in the *Mahometan*, than in the *Nazarene* Countries; yet we are much more persecuted there, and at least as much hated.

I know not whether thou didst ever hear of the Oppression of our People by the *Persians*, about a hundred and fifty Years ago. The Mufti's of *Ispahan*, coveting the Treasure of the *Jews* who inhabited that City, presented a Memorial to the Sophi *Sha-Abas*, wherein they desired him to see the Orders and Precepts contained in the *Alcoran* put in execution; of which one of the most material related to the Conversion of the *Jews*, *who were obliged five hundred Years after the Publication of* Mahomet's *Religion, to embrace the* Mussulmens' *Faith, or to be utterly destroyed.* The Sophi, who was a very devout Man in his Religion, but yet did not care to dip his Hands in innocent Blood, sent for the *Jews*, and examined them what Faith they had in *Mahomet*. Judge thou, dear *Monceca*, what a Confusion our Brethren were in at this Question: They saw it was put to them with no other Design, but to convince them of Blasphemy against the false *Mussulman* Prophet, and under that Pretext to ruin and destroy them entirely. After having conferred with one another for a Time, they resolved to soften their Answer as much as possible, and told the Sophi, that though their Religion hindered them from believing in any other Prophet but *Moses*, yet they did not think that *Mahomet* was a false Prophet, because he was descended from *Ishmael*, the Son of *Abraham*; and that they were desirous of remaining his Majesty's most humble Subjects and Slaves. But the Scene was not ended till the *Jews* had given him two millions of Money in Gold. And, in order to extort

extort another Supply, and to pave the Way for some other Oppression, they were obliged to fix the Time in which they expected their *Messiah* to come. Being as much astonished at this second Demand as at the first, they answered, That their Deliverer might, for ought they knew, come to-morrow. *Well then,* said the Sophi, *I give you seventy Years, and will cause your Answer to be registered in the Archieves of the Empire, to the End that if you are Impostors, and your* Messiah *does not appear by that Time, you may be proscribed and banished out of the Empire, by such Successors of mine as shall be upon the Throne when the seventy Years are expired.* This fatal Arret was afterwards really put in Execution, and *Sha-Abbas* II. caused a Declaration to be published, *commanding his Subjects, and the Foreigners that dwelt among them, to fall upon the* Jews *as so many wild Beasts, to put the Men, Women, and Children to the Sword, to seize their Estates, and to spare none but such as turned* Mahometans. This Persecution lasted near three Years, till the Country was quite cleared of our Brethren, of whom many were put to Death, and the rest fled to the *Indies* and *Mogul.* It is said, that this bloody Proscription was owing to certain Letters from *Constantinople*, that made mention of the *Messiah*'s being come upon Earth.

The *Messiah* then talked of, was that famous Impostor *Sabbathai Sevi*, who disgraced our Nation by their Readiness to swallow his Lyes. There are *Jews* still living at *Smyrna*, who saw this Knave. He chose this City for the Theatre of his Knavery; and here he acquired that Fame which reached from Pole to Pole, and was the more pernicious to us, the more it was taken notice of.

Since my Arrival here, I have been told some very particular Stories of this *Sabbathai Sevi:* He was born at *Smyrna*, and his Father was one *Mardochai*,

dochai, a sickly Man, always afflicted with Distempers; whereas, on the contrary, the Son was vigorous and well shaped, with a grim Look, curled Hair, and his Whiskers turned up. He led a very austere Life, and was a rigid Observer of the Law of *Moses*, with which he was perfectly acquainted, as also with the Secrets of the *Talmud*. He might be about forty Years of Age, when he thought fit to give out that he was the *Meskah*. His Retinue consisted of five or six Rabbies, who went for his Disciples; of these *Nathan Benjamin* was one of the most considerable, and held most in Esteem. This *Jew* had the Character of a Man of very great Wisdom and Virtue, and was especially remarkable for his great Humility.

The Impostor *Sabbathai Sevi*, had soon a vast Number of Adherents and Followers, who, upon his Word, believed that he was really that illustrious Protector, who is to deliver our Nation from Captivity. Mankind being always ready to adhere blindly to what they like, and to embrace their first Ideas, most of the *Jews* that were dispersed through the four Parts of the World, put themselves in Motion, and prepared to list under the Banner of a Traitor who was a Scandal to our Religion. In *Persia*, towards *Susa*, there were above eight thousand *Jews* already assembled; and there were near a hundred thousand in *Barbary*, and the Deserts of *Tafilet*, that resolved to own him for their King an their Prophet. Those who lived in the remotest Countries, were infected to the same Degree with the Contagion and Phrenzy. Many *Jews*, who were dispersed in the North, and in *Holland*, sold their Houses to go to the *Levant*, and to live under the Empire of this new Sovereign. The *Nazarenes*, who always speak from Ill-will, say, that the *Jews* of *Amsterdam* had actually drawn up a Petition to be

be presented to *Sabbathai Sevi*, desiring that they might have the sole License of advancing Money to *Jerusalem* upon Pledges. It is certain that the *Portuguese* Refugee *Jews*, had several Meetings to take proper Measures for the Ratification of their ancient Titles; and they had resolved to depute one of their Body to *Smyrna*, to desire the New Deliverer to permit them to join the Title of *Don* to their Names, as they did formerly in *Portugal*, and that they might be stiled in *Judea* Don *Moses*, Don *Jacob*, *&c.* They were all for remonstrating, that in justice they ought to have a distinguished Rank and a separate Place in the Temple, being not used to go to the Synagogues of the *German Jews*, who were but miserable *Smaus*. But the thing which they had most at Heart was, to obtain some honourable Titles for their chief Men, for which they offered to pay very handsomely, and to give as much as they do now the *Nazarene* Princes that want Money.

Mean Time, Heaven, in pity to the Mistake of our Nation, was resolved ro strip off the Mask, and expose the Cheat; *Sabbathai Sevi* gave Notice to the *Jews* at *Smyrna*, that he was going to *Constantinople* to tell the Grand Signior that he must restore the Temple at *Jerusalem*. He embarked accordingly in a *Turkish* Saique, and there were People so infatuated as to believe, that the Vessel vanished as soon as *Sabbathai Sevi* went on board. But so far was this false Prophet from having the Command of all the Elements, that he had not the least Power over the Winds, which were always against him; so that it was near six Weeks before he got as far as the *Dardanelles*, where he was arrested by Order of the Grand Vizier, who having heard of *Sabbathai Sevi*'s Impostures, thought it his Duty to examine him. The Man was clapped up in one of the *European*

ropean Castles; and the Vizier being obliged to go upon an Expedition to *Candia*, the Seducer of our Nation was left in Prison. Several *Jews*, who were still persuaded that he was the *Messiah*, flocked from all Parts to see him; so that his Keepers grew rich by the Contributions they extorted from his Visiters. The Fame of this Impostor spread so much at last, that the Grand Signior ordered him to be carried to *Constantinople*, where having sent for him to the Seraglio, *I will now know*, said that Prince to him, *whether thou art the* Messiah *or not. Choose either to be bound to a Post, and to be made a Butt for my Cross-bow-men, or to turn* Turk. The miserable *Sabbathai Sevi* did not hesitate to save his Life at the Expence of his Religion. He put on the Turban, and the Grand Signior gave him both his Life and Liberty, to mortify our Nation, which was for a long Time the Laughing-stock of the *Ottoman* Empire, and of the whole Universe. Let us never be too ready to give Credit to Reports; for when the Time of our Deliverance is come, the Miracles will be so evident, that all the World will be convinced of their Reality.

Fare thee well, dear *Monceca*, and preserve thy Health.

LETTER

LETTER LIV.

AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris, *to* ISAAC ONIS, *a Caraite, at* Smyrna, *formerly a Rabbi, at* Constantinople.

YESTERDAY I was an Eye-witness of a great Number of *Nazarene* Ceremonies, that I had never been present at before. The Chevalier *de Maisin*, to whom I have fresh Obligations every Day, desired me to go with him to one of his Relations that had been sick for some Time past; and was at the Point of Death, insomuch that the Physicians said he could not possibly live above twenty-four Hours at most: And in *France* it is the Custom, and a Decorum required by the nearest of Kin, to meet at the dying Person's Chamber, to assist him to go out of this World with less Pain, and to give him the necessary Passports and Assistance for his Journey to the next.

An Enquiry only into the Customs of the *Nazarenes* while they are on their sick Beds, would furnish Matter for a whole Volume of Reflexions. As soon as a Man is down in a Fever, or any Disorder that endangers his Life, his Heir, who, generally speaking, longs for the happy Moment to see him expire, assumes, notwithstanding all his secret Joy, a sad and melancholy Countenance: So sorrowful does he look, that one would hardly believe he would survive the sick Man, who, being now delivered over to a Physician, *Galen's* Disciple takes him by the Hand, gravely feels his Pulse, coughs and spits before he utters a Word, and

and after that Prelude, he tells the Name of the Distemper in *Greek*; and as *Hippocrates* said, that *Life is short, Experience dangerous, and Learning difficult to acquire* *, so the modern Doctor requires a Consultation of three Physicians, in order to know the Name and Seat of the Disease with Certainty. Mean Time, in order to assist, support, and prepare Nature, he prescribes some anodyne and detersive Clysters to cleanse, wash, and comfort the Bowels, and to diminish, abate, and dissipate the Vapours of the Brain. Then the Apothecary is sent for, who attends with his Apprentice, and a Boy to carry the Clyster-pipe, for it is not here as it is at *Constantinople*, where the same Doctor prescribes, prepares, and administers the Remedies. In *France* every Agent of *Hippocrates* has his regular District; the Physician's Business is to order; the Prerogative of the Apothecary is to purge upward and downward; and the Veins, Bones, and Muscles, are in the Province of the Surgeons. Were a sick Man to die a hundred Deaths, not one of them must meddle in what does not belong to his Function. A Physician especially would be in Disgrace if he stooped to the subaltern Offices of the Apothecary; and it were enough to ruin his Reputation for ever, if he did but happen to lay his Finger on a Clyster-pipe, though by Mistake. There was a Time too when the Apothecaries would fain have been exempted from giving Clysters themselves, and caused those Operations to be performed by their Apprentices, but the Physicians were scandalized at the grand Airs they gave themselves; they imagined the Apothecaries had an Ambition to rise above their Degree, and incroach upon the Privileges of the Physician, and therefore

* *Vita brevis, Experimentum periculosum, Judicium difficile.* It is the first of the Aphorisms of *Hippocrates*.

got an Act of the Faculty passed, *that they should prepare and apply the Clysters with their own Hand, without having any Help in that Operation by their Apprentices, who should only be Standers-by* *.

A *Nazarene* who is sick is obliged to submit to the whole Ceremonial settled between *Æsculapius*'s Children. He must resolve with himself to die by Rule.

When the Physicians, who are called to consult about the Origin and Cause of a Distemper, have declared their Opinion, he who has the chief Care of restoring the Patient to Health, thanks his Brethren who are amply paid for their Advice. He then remains sole Master of the Field of Battle; he directs, he commands, and acts sovereignly, till the *Nazarene*'s Distemper has brought him to the

* The Physicians at *Paris*, after a long Debate, obtained an Arret forbidding the Apothecaries to prescribe to the Sick, and enjoining them to carry their Remedies themselves: *Renard* has bantered this Dispute between the Physicians and the Apothecaries in his Comedy of the *Legatée*, wherein he makes M. *Clistoret* say,

Ils vouloient obliger tous nos Apoticaîres,
A faire, & mettre en Place eux-mêmes leurs Clisteres;
Et que tous nos Garçons ne fussent qu' assistans.
Ma foi! ces Médecins sont de vilaines Gens!
Il m'auroit fait beau voir, aveque des Lunettes,
Faire, en jeune Aprentif, ces Fonctions secretes!

Which may be thus *Englished:*

They would fain oblige all our Apothecaries not only to make their Clysters, but to apply them; and that all Apprentices should only be Spectators. Verily, these Physicians are sorry Men. It would be a fine Sight indeed to see me poring with my Spectacles on my Nose, to perform those secret Functions, like a 'Prentice-boy.

Brink

Brick of the Grave. He then ſhares his Authority with the ſpiritual Director and Confeſſor. Theſe Phyſicians of the Soul obſerve even more Formalities than thoſe of the Body. As ſoon as they are called, they demand of the ſick Perſons to make a ſincere Confeſſion of all the Actions of their Lives; when they think that a Soul has been ſtained by any, they cleanſe it and purify it by magic Words, which they mutter in the Ear of the Patient, and add ſeveral ſtrange Geſtures and Grimaces. After this, they aſk the ſick Perſons if they are inclined to give any pious Legacy to the Saints, and to the Prieſts who ſerve at their Altars, in order to inſure their Protection in the Journey they are going to enter upon. There are few *Nazarenes* but what leave ſomething in their Wills to feaſt the Monks of their Quarter, for they would really believe they ſhould be damned if ſome religious Society or other did not mutter ſome Anthem after their Death, and tune ſome Verſe in Favour of their Souls.

When the Confeſſor has made Proviſion for the Support and Nouriſhment of the ſpiritual Paſtors, he takes Care of the Patient's Family and Relations, cauſes ſome Legacy to be left them, more or leſs according as he takes a Fancy to them; for the Power which a Director has over a *Nazarene* on his Death-bed is exorbitant. The Patient thinks every Thing well done, provided it be by Order of his Confeſſor, whom he looks upon as his Guardian Angel going to lead him by the Hand into the Heavenly Manſions. At laſt when he has but a Moment longer to live, a Ceremony is performed for him at parting, of which I could never gueſs the Reaſon. A Prieſt dreſſed in a white Linnen Surplice, and a Piece of Stuff about his Neck three Inches wide, which falls down to his Knees, brings

a little Urn of Silver in which there is a very glutinous Oil, wherewith he rubs the sick Man's Limbs. After this Ceremony, he rehearses some Prayer in *Latin*, which the sick Person often does not understand one Word of, and orders the Soul to depart the Body in Peace and quiet. This done, all the Company retire in Tears, and no body is left with the *Nazarene* but the Priest, who receives his last Sign, and continues with him while he expires, repeating some *Latin* Prayers in Honour of the dying Person's Patron, whom he forewarns to be ready to receive the Soul as soon as it is fled, and disingaged from the Shackles of the Body.

If I did not know that the *Nazarenes* believe the Soul to be spiritual, I should imagine they made Use of this Oil to make it easier for the subtle Matter to detach itself, and to evaporate through the Pores which such anointing would open. But the *Nazarenes* are of Opinion that the Soul is meerly a Spirit breathed into Man by the Divinity. Therefore it is impossible for me to penetrate into the Reason of this Custom, and indeed they have so many that it is difficult to know the Cause and Source of them all. I think always that I am thoroughly acquainted with their Manners, and yet I every now and then discover several Things among them, which I was ignorant of before.

I was passing by a Church of the Monks one Evening about nine o'Clock, and seeing a great many Women come out of it, I had the Curiosity to know what they had been doing there; and for that Purpose I applied to a *Nazarene* of my Acquaintance who was then with me. 'These Women, *said he*, are just come from their *Retreat*. 'What do you mean, *said I*, by coming from their 'Retreat? Why, *said he*, there are certain Con-

'vents

'vents of Monks who every Year give to Women, of whom they are their spiritual Directors, 'a Sort of Respite from worldly Occupations for 'fifteen or sixteen Days together. They meet several Times a Day to hear the Exhortations of 'the Director then in Vogue, who is commonly 'the Chief or Head of those pious Societies which 'the Monks call *Congregations*. Of these there are 'several Sorts, and for People of all the different 'Classes. By this Means the Monks acquire great 'Credit, all the Assemblies being entirely devoted 'to the Orders by which they are conducted and 'directed.' I said to the *Nazarene*, 'That I thought 'this was a good Custom, because the Reflexions 'which may be made during such a Retreat for 'fifteen Days, when the Mind is not distracted by 'disturbing Ideas, may be useful, and tend to the 'Reformation of Manners. You are not well acquainted, *said he*, with the Nature of those Assemblies; they are really Parties of Pleasure, and 'serve rather to animate the Desires, than to suppress them. A Woman in these external Appearances of Devotion finds an Opportunity of increasing her Assignations, and she who never 'used to see her Lover till after Dinner, sees him 'every Time she goes to the Congregation.' They 'who have not their full Liberty at Home, are 'sure especially to take the Opportunity when their 'Husbands cannot suspect them; and I will warrant 'you that Half of the Women that you saw go out 'of the Church just now, have already forgot all 'the Exhortations they heard this Day. What I 'tell you (continued the *Nazarene*) is most strictly 'true, and such very frequent Assemblies for Devotion are dreadful Rocks on which the Virtue of 'the Fair Sex is in evident Danger of Splitting.

'It is a Custom with us to send Missions to all 'the Towns, to endeavour to reform the People, 'and incline them to Virtue. A certain Bishop 'who complained sadly of the Women and Girls of 'his Diocese, and who preached and took a world 'of fruitless Pains to restrain their Gallantries, re-'solved to have Recourse to more effectual Reme-'dies. He sent for four of the most eminent Mis-'sionaries, whose Exhortations had immediately a 'surprizing Effect: By four o'Clock in the Morn-'ing the Churches were full of People, who all 'promised to lead better Lives than they had done 'before: And one would have thought that the 'Diocesans of this Bishop were become *Nine-'vites*, to whom another *Jonah* was preaching 'Repentance. The Women and Girls were above 'all very assiduous at the several Assemblies which 'were held by Night; and at Day-break the 'Citizens' Wives, the Country Women, and the 'Ladies of Quality strove who should be there first. 'At length the Mission being ended, the pious 'Prelate thought that his Flock was sanctified for 'ever hereafter. At the Departure of the Missiona-'ries, the whole Town was in Tears, and the 'young Women especially seemed to be most 'grieved, which so affected the Preachers that they 'promised to return again next Year. But the 'Bishop was far from recalling them; for at the 'End of that Year the Hospital had eight hundred 'Foundlings more to take Care of than before. 'The Mission was the real Occasion of this Multi-'plication, for the Fair Sex were not negligent of 'the Liberty of going out at Night and Morning. 'Their Gallants were not taken Notice of at a Time 'which was supposed to be devoted to Repentance; 'and Love, which never loses it's Prerogatives, defeat-'ed all the Exhortations of the good Missionaries, who

'probably

'probably made a Trip to some other Town to serve 'the State as effectually, and to repair the Preju-'dice occasioned by the Celibacy of the Priests.'

I thought what the *Nazarene* had told me was pleasant enough, but I was uneasy to see how Men abuse the best and most useful Things, to favour their Crimes. The *French* are not the only People who make Religion serve as a Cloak for Actions that are the most contrary to Piety. All Nations and People, be their Faith what it will, make the most sacred Customs and the best established Usages subservient to the Depravation of their Manners. The Women in *Turky* only desire leave to go to the Mosques for the Sake of seeing their Lovers there; and there are many *Turks* that build a Chapel for them in their Seraglio. There are some too, who, to shorten all Ceremonies, make them believe that their Souls are mortal, and dispense with them from praying to God.

Fare thee well, dear *Isaac*, and live content and happy.

LETTER LV.

From AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris, *to* JACOB BRITO, *at* Venice.

I KNOW not, dear *Brito*, whether the News from *Corsica* is so much talked of at *Venice* as it is at *Paris*; but what they give out here upon that Head is very surprizing and hardly credible, if we had not evident Assurances of it. Is there any Thing, in short, so extraordinary as to see a Stranger come to an Island from the Coasts of *Africa*,

and be owned as Sovereign by a People, and actually received as their Deliverer, and this too in the Face of all *Europe*, but forty or fifty Leagues from *France* and *Italy*, and no Power seem to be concerned in it but the unhappy *Genoese*, who are in a very perplexed Situation. Were one to run over all the *Amadis*, I do not think there is any Adventure so romantic. I no longer wonder that *Sancho Pancha* had such firm Hopes of his being King of an Island. I perceive the Thing was not impossible, provided his Master * could have given him wherewi hal to buy three thousand Pair of Shoes, four thousand Muskets, and Six Brass Guns; for that is the Present which the new King of *Corsica* has made to his People. He arrived at his new Government on board a Ship of Force, which, as they say, carried *English* Colours. He was dressed in a fantastical Manner, his Habit being a Medley of the various Modes of all Nations. His Robe was *Turkish*, the Sword by his Side was *Spanish*, his Peruke was *English*, his great Hat *German*, and his Cane was of the Halbert Fashion, like those used by the *French* Beaus. He must have some Reason for so whimsical a Medley. Perhaps he intends by his Dress to denote all the Dignities with which he is invested; for he assumes the Titles of a Grandee of *Spain*, a Lord of *England*, a Peer of *France*, Baron of the Holy Empire, and a Prince of the *Roman* Throne. His Sword *a la mode de Spain* supplies the Place of the *Golden Fleece*; his *English* Peruke that of the *Garter*; his Halbert-Cane that of the *Blue String*; his great *German* fashioned Hat denotes the Quality of Baron of the Holy Empire; and his great scarlet Robe signifies the Diminutive of a Cardinal, or if you please a *Roman* Prince.

* Don *Quixote*.

Notwithstanding

Notwithstanding the Banters of the Public upon Baron *Theodore* I. the new made King of *Corsica*, he has, since his Arrival in that Country, reduced the *Genoese* to a very dangerous State. He has taken the advantageous Post of *Porto Vecchio*, and the Town of *Sarsena*, in which he found a great Quantity of Ammunition; and if he goes on at this Rate, he will soon be in a Condition to lay Siege to *Bastia*, and to take the Capital of the Island from his Enemies. What is most surprizing in all the Actions and Proceedings of King *Theodore* is, that he is in no want of Money. Before he came to *Corsica*,

La Nature marâtre, en ces afreux Climats,
Produisoit, au lieu d'Or, du Fer & des Soldats *.

Step-Dame Nature in these hideous Climates,
Instead of Gold, Soldiers produc'd and Iron.

Whereas now, there is not a Mountaineer in *Corsica* but can shew a Piece of Gold. The Coins that are most current in this Island are *Sequins*, *Murlitons*, and *Portuguese* Pieces. The Wizard by whom this adventurous Knight-Errant is protected, does not let him want for Money, and takes special Care of the Affairs of this new Monarch. All *Europe* is really as much perplexed to know who this notable Magician can be, as it was at first to know the true Origin of Lord *Theodore*. Some said that it was Prince *Ragotski*, others the Duke de *Ripperda*, and their Reason for thinking so, was the Report that the Lord *Theodore* heard three Masses a Day. This is a Circumstance which I think might comport with the Bigotry of *Ragotski*, but it was ridiculous to imagine that the Duke de *Ripperda* could turn a staunch *Nazarene*

* *Crebillon* in *Rhadamistus* and *Zenobia*.

at *Morocco*. If that were true, I would advise the *French* to send most of their Physicians to *Sorbonne* Doctors to take a Turn there.

The Name, Rank, and Quality of the new King, are indeed now no longer a Secret, all the World being agreed that he is the Baron *de Neuhoff*, born in the County of *la Mark*, and a Subject of the King of *Prussia*; but the Public is still at a Loss to discover who is that powerful Magician that so handsomly rewards a Knight-Errant, and that without putting him to the least Expence. But what would be the Use of such Reflexions as I might be capable of making on so mysterious a Subject; Time will discover the Secret, and Nothing but Time can unravel so extraordinary an Adventure, which the more we examine we are the more surprized at a thousand Incidents that render it the more mervellous and romantic. This Baron *de Neuhoff*, now King of *Corsica*, was a Year ago a Slave at *Algier*; which is a Circumstance of his Life that he himself acquaints the Public with, by a Letter that he wrote in the *German* Tongue to one of his Relations since his Arrival in his new Dominions. *You have not heard*, said he to him, *of the Misfortune I had to be taken at Sea last Year, and carried to* Algier *as a Slave; from which, however, though with very considerable Loss, I have found Means to deliver myself; but I must defer till another Opportunity to acquaint you of what I have since by the Divine Favour acquired.*

Do not you think it pleasant, dear *Brito*, to hear the Slave of an *Algerine* decline the owning his Obligations for his Grandeur to any Thing but the Divine Favour; and that the Man who but a Year ago ran the Risk of being bastinaded for the least Fault, should now say with an Emphasis, *Theodore* I. *by the Grace of God, King of* Corsica *and* Bastia,

Bastia, *to the Officers of our Councils and Courts of Justice, to our Senators, Proveditors, Bailiffs, Stewards, &c. Greeting.* These are the Frolics of blind Fortune which delights to raise a Man from Nothing to the most distinguished Honours; and we often see a Man preferred from the Dregs of the People to great Employments. It is true there are few Examples of so great and sudden a Rise as Lord *Theodore*'s; yet if we go so far back as the first Origin of Kingly Power, we shall find that the Men who were designed and elected to command their Fellow Creatures, had no greater or more just Prerogatives over the People, than *Theodore* has over the *Corsicans*. The Name of *King* would to to this Day have been unknown in the World, if the common Interest of Mankind had not forced them to vest the chief Power and Authority in a single Person. The *Corsicans* made desperate by the *Genoese*, have had Recourse to a private Person to deliver them from Tyranny. If he restores them to Liberty, and frees them from Slavery, what signifies it to them what Condition he was born in?

Un Guerrier généreux, que la Vertu couronne,
Vaut bien un Roi formé par le secours des Loix:
*Le prémier qui le fût n' eût pour lui que sa voix.**

'*i. e.* A generous Warrior crowned with Virtue, 'is as good as a King formed by the Help of the 'Laws: The first Man that ever was a King, was 'only so by his own Voice.

If we consider the Conduct of the *Corsicans*, it does not seem to be a whit more ridiculous; they reward their Benefactor, they honour their Deliverer; why should it be deemed criminal in them to pay homage to Virtue, and to have Gratitude?

* *Crebillon* in *Semiramis*.

It is my opinion they act very judiciously, and that all their Proceedings are regulated by good Sense and sound Policy. Whatsoever Credit and Authority they have granted to their new Prince, they have nevertheless given a check to the monarchical Authority; and their Sovereign can lay no Tax nor Impost upon them, nor publish any new Law without the Approbation of his Great Council, which consists of eighteen Senators that represent the States of the Kingdom. Lord *Theodore* has only the same Prerogatives as Men granted to the first Sovereigns †, whom they elected; he commands the Armies, and does Justice according to the Laws and Customs of the Country, which he cannot change without the Consent of the Nation. In short, he has a great deal of Power to do good, but not the least Authority to do harm.

May they perish, dear *Brito*, who maintain the pernicious Maxim, that *Men were only created blindly to serve a single Person.*, Nothing but Pride can make a Sentiment go down which violates all Laws, overturns the World, and seems to attack the Deity himself. The Laws were made before Sovereigns, who therefore are bound by them as well as their Subjects. A private Person who is wanting in Duty to his Country, and his Prince, is a dishonest Man; and a King who violates the Laws, and despises Justice, is unworthy to command.

Tyranny was unknown among Men, till the Time when the Ambition of the Courtiers deified the Vices of the Sovereigns. The Crimes of bad Kings sprung from those of their Subjects; Flatterers poisoned the Majesty of the Throne, from whence they banished real Grandeur to make Room

† Thou shalt be our Captain in War, and thou shalt do us Justice.

for

for chimærical Honours, founded upon the Misfortunes of Mankind.

Princes ought to mind Nothing but the good of their People to whom they are Fathers, or at least supply the Place of such. The Patriarchs to whom they succeeded were crowned Kings and Fathers of their Families by the Hands of Nature, they governed them by the Laws of Nature; and that wise Jurisprudence continued without Interruption, till Men became so wicked as to have need of written Laws, and of a King, who, though he had as much Power as the Father of a Family, had less Good-nature and Inclination to Pardon. Therefore it was Wickedness that introduced Sovereigns. If Men had always been just, they would always have been free, and would have had no Necessity either for Governors, Judges, or Advocates. But since it is necessary that they should be restrained by Fear, and since they are such vile Slaves to their Passions that they are only virtuous from the Apprehension of Punishment, they are bound for their own Sakes to grant that Power to one or more, which they might have shared in the General among all. But he whom they own for their Sovereign is obliged to submit himself to the Laws, because he has no Power but what is by virtue of those very Laws by which Men are commanded to honour and obey those who are trusted with the Government of them.

When a Prince violates the Rules of Justice, what a pernicious Example does he not set to his Subjects? Does he not as good as tell them, 'That Faith, Oaths, and the most sacred Customs 'are Ties that may be broke with Safety? Follow 'my Example; be only wise and just where you 'cannot be criminal with Impunity.'

Mean

Mean Time do not imagine, dear *Brito* that I have a Thought of limiting the sovereign Authority; I am willing that Justice should accompany it, in order to render it more respected. Is not Equity the Principle of real Grandeur? and where there is a wise and good King, who is the Father of his People, and governs them in Peace and Plenty, has not such a one more absolute Command of their Hearts than a Tyrant who is only served out of Fear?

Perhaps thou wilt ask me, to what Degree I am of Opinion that Subjects ought to be true to their Kings? I answer, It is my Opinion that it is in no Case lawful for them to pass Sentence upon the Man, whom God has set over them for their Judge. It is for that Almighty Being to punish bad Kings. The Subjects ought to pray to the Divinity to reform their Transgressions; but content with lifting up their Hands to Heaven, if their Prayers are not heard, they cannot rebel against the Lord's Anointed without enormous Guilt.

God makes Use of wicked Sovereigns as of a Scourge like to a Pestilence or Famine. Tyrants are born for the Punishment of Mankind. We must submit to the Hand of the Lord, who punisheth or rewardeth us according as we deserve. It was the Divine Wrath that made the *Caligula*'s and the *Nero*'s reign in Rome; and the Excesses to which those Monsters pushed Things, were but a just Punishment of the Crimes of the *Romans*.

It would be altogether as criminal an Absurdity to argue that a Man may rebel against his Prince, as to offer to excuse the ridiculous Conduct of the *Chinese* towards their Gods. While they expect any Good from them, they honour and respect them; but when they do not obtain their Desires, they treat them with the utmost Contempt. *What*

thou

thou Dog of a Spirit, say they to him sometimes, *do we lodge thee in a very fine Temple, do we maintain thee in Clover, while thou art well gilt, well perfumed, and dost thou refuse us the Favours which we desire of thee?* Then they take a great Whip and lash the Idol for ten or twelve Days successively. If during that Time they obtain their Request, they make several Excuses to it; *Why*, say they, *Mr. Spirit, were you so obstinate; It is true that we were a little importunate, but when all is said and done, were not you in the Wrong to be so hard-hearted a Deity? Why would you subject your self to be beaten for the Purpose? However, since what is done cannot be undone, let us think of it no more; you shall be re-adored, you shall be perfumed over again, and you shall have wherewithal to make excellent Cheer, provided you forget what is past* *.

A *Chinese* who had one of the most wilful and whimsical Idols, being vexed at the needless Expence which he had laid out a long time upon it, and being unwilling to be the Dupe of so ill-natured a Deity, be prosecuted him, and summoned him before the sovereign Council of *Pekin*. After several Sessions wherein the Bonzes made the best Defence that they could for the Idol, the Idolater carried his Cause. *The Court in regard to the Plea of the* Chinese, *and in Justice to the same, condemned the Idol as quite Useless in the Kingdom, to perpetual Banishment; his Temple was razed to the Ground, and the Bonzes who served at the Altar of the Idol were severely punished; only they were allowed to bring their Actions before other Spirits of the Province in order to make themselves Reparation for the Punishment which they had received for the sake of this* †.

* History of *China*, tom. ii. p. 223.
† *Ibid.* p. 224.

As

As ridiculous and impious, as it would be to attempt to justify Actions so extravagant, it would be altogether as criminal to argue that the People may of their own accord do themselves Justice upon those to whom the Almighty has remitted the sovereign Power, and whom he has rendered accountable for it to himself alone.

The Laws are the Judges of Men; the Kings are the Executioners of those Laws; and God is the sole Master of sovereign Princes.

Fare thee well, dear *Brito*, and let me hear from thee oftener.

LETTER LVI.

From JACOB BRITO, *at* Venice, *to* AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris.

VENICE, my dear *Monceca*, is not like most of the Towns of *Italy*, which only furnish general Reflexions upon the Manners of their Inhabitants. The meanest Sort of People at *Venice*, the Women, the Priests, the Children, all the several Classes in this Country are worthy of Notice. In my former Letters I gave thee some Account of the Goverment in general; I shall now enter into a little more circumstantial Detail of the particular Customs.

The Noblemen when they appear in the Streets are always dressed in a Robe of black Cloth, which in the Winter is lined with a grey Russet, and in the Summer with Ermin. Though Fur is not very seasonable in *Italy* in the Month of *August*, yet were they to drop down with the Heat they must not dress

dreſs otherwiſe; for Majeſty, Grandeur, and Policy demanding it, they have nothing more to do than to yield Obedience. Nor is it in this Reſpect only that the *Venetian* Noblemen are Victims to their Rank; they are the ſame almoſt in every Action of their Lives. They are called by the Title of Excellency, and the Way of ſaluting them is to kiſs their Sleeve. The Elbow of this Sleeve is like a large Sack, and commonly ſerves as a Wallet to the *Venetian* Nobles when they go to the Market or the Shambles; ſo that in this Sleeve, which is the Reſidence of *Venetian* Grandeur, there is very often a Leg of Mutton and a dozen of Artichokes. This may appear ſtrange to thee, but the Nobles go themſelves to buy their Proviſions, without being attended by any Domeſtic, and without being ſaluted by any, except ſuch as are of their particular Acquaintance. They pretend to Wit, and to be excellent Politicians, but this is no more than what all the *Venetians* think of themſelves; for in this Reſpect the very Gondoliers, who are no more than Watermen or Rowers, will not truckle an Inch to the firſt Nobleman; and they boaſt that no Undertaking is too difficult for them to ſucceed in.

It is true, that a Gondolier will carry on a Love-Intrigue better than any body, and that he brings it to a happy Iſſue, whatever Difficulty lies in the Way. *He knows all the Turnings and Windings; he pretends to know the critical Minutes and the Back-ſtairs; he has an Underſtanding with the* Abigails; *he furniſhes the Rope-Ladders too if there be Occaſion:* In ſhort, he can give good Advice to the politeſt Monks, and might be admitted, if he were in *France*, to the ſecret Councils of the Convulſionaries. In order to have a perfect Idea of him, believe him to be as deceitful as a convulſionary Janſeniſt,

senist, as artful as a Jesuit, as confident as a Cordelier, as debauched as a Carmelite, and as hypocritical as a young Abbé that lies upon the Catch for a Benefice.

The Carnival is the Time when the Gondoliers have most Business, by reason of the great Number of Foreigners then at *Venice*; but as soon as Lent comes in, every body begins to dislodge; not only Travellers, but the Puppet-shews, Stage-players, Bears, Monsters, Curiosities, and Courtezans; that is to say, such as come for Devotion-sake from the neighbouring Countries: For they take care that those of *Venice* shall not desert, they being deemed of too great Importance to the Welfare of the State. These also study Politics; for their Professions, though painful and fatiguing enough in other Respects, does not hinder them from applying to it; and some of them have really made a Figure in that Science. One in particular, who would fain imitate *Solon*, and cast a Lustre upon the Profession of Ladies of Pleasure, caused a stately Chapel to be built out of the Money she had gained, and dedicated it to one *St. Magdalen the Ægyptian*, that had been an infamous Harlot, just as that Legislator of the *Athenians* built a Temple of *Venus* out of the Money which had been received by the common Whores.

The Churches of this City are very beautiful; but the *Venetians* give them such Names, that one would think their Religion had a Mixture of the *Jewish*. I know not whether it is their Indifference for the Court of *Rome*, that hinders them from invoking the Saints which it has canonized, but almost all their Temples are dedicated to our Patriarchs and our Prophets. A *Jew*, at his first Arrival in this Country, is very much surprized to hear their Churches called by the Names of St. *Job*, St. *Moses*, St.

St. *Samuel*, St. *Jeremiah*, St. *Daniel*, and St. *Zachary*. The Monks who serve at St. *Jeremiah*'s affirm, that they have still a Tooth of that Prophet. I enquired very strictly whether they had not some Horn of our Legislator in the Temple of St. *Moses*, but I could not find they had; nor whether in St. *Job*'s they had preserved any of that honest Man's Scabs in some holy Phial. A Fryar told me in Confidence, that such Relicts were very uncommon and dear, the Court of *Rome* selling them at an excessive Price: So that, in all Appearance, there is nothing in the Temple of *Moses* but the Arms, Legs, and Jaws of *Nazarene* Saints; and no Relics of the ancient *Israelites* in all *Venice*, but the single Tooth of the Prophet *Jeremiah*, which is kept in a Gold Case adorned with Diamonds: It is so big, that it seems to be the Tooth of a Horse rather than of a Man; at which the Monk who shewed it to me, told me, That I ought not to be surprized, because the ancient Fathers were much taller than we are.

This monstrous Tooth put me in Mind of another Relic, which a Friend of mine told me he had seen in a very fine Church at *Munich*: It is a *Vertebræ*, or Chine-bone, as big as that of an Elephant, or some other great Animal; and is held in singular Veneration throughout all *Bavaria*, as being one of the *Vertebræ* of the huge St. *Christopher*.

Though the Monks at *Venice*, as well as in other Countries, set a great Value upon their Relics, yet they seldom find any but among the meaner Sort of People, that are ready to believe all the Miracles which they ascribe to them. Persons of Rank look upon these Things as Amusements, which are absolutely necessary for the Vulgar; nevertheless, if there should ever happen to be at *Venice*, any Relics

so

so troublesome as those of St. *Paris* are in *France*, I do not doubt but the Senate would immediately order them to be thrown into the *Adriatic* Gulph, and very severely punish those that should offer to make them popular. The Republic having a Quarrel some time ago with one of the sovereign Pontiffs, the latter actually interdicted and suspended the whole Clergy of *Venice*. The Senate commanded the Priests to continue their Functions. Mean time some of the Fryars * obeyed the Pontiff, but they were soon chastised for their Rebellion against the Orders of the State; for they were banished out of the Republic, and though recalled when the Senate and Pontiff were reconciled, it was only by Favour, and upon very hard Conditions.

I formerly acquainted thee, dear *Monceca*, in some of my Letters, how dangerous it is in this Country to cabal against the State, and with what Severity the bare Appearance of this Crime is punished. Great Rewards are given to those who inform against the Disturber of the public Tranquility, when the Intelligence is capable of being really useful. Informations and Letters, even from anonymous Hands, are attended to; though it is true they make a prudent cautious Use of such Intelligence. There are in the Piazzas of St. *Mark*'s Palace, and in several Parts of it's Galleries, the Muzzles of certain Animals, in the Mouths of which any Person may put Letters as they do Money into a Box at Church for the Poor, with such Informations as they think fit to give to the Inquisitors of the State. This is what they call *Denuntie Secrete*, *i. e.* Secret Information. But for all this, do not imagine, dear *Monceca*, that there is any great Danger

* The Jesuits and the Capuchin Fryars.

from

from ſuch anonymous Information, and that it puts any Man in the Power of his Enemy. The Judges who compoſe the State Inquiſition, are ſo candid and prudent, that no body need to fear Puniſhment if he is not really guilty. We do not find any Country in the World, where Mankind is ſo free as at *Venice*. The *Armenians*, *Jews*, and *Greeks*, have the public Exerciſe of their Ceremonies. All the other Religions are likewiſe tolerated; but they do not pretend to know that there are any ſuch Aſſemblies, they being held in ſuch a prudent Manner, that the Senate has no Reaſon at all to complain of them. The very Monks here have full Freedom; they put on the Maſk when they pleaſe at the Carnival, keep a Concubine, ſing at the Theatre, and, in ſhort, do what they liſt, provided their Debauchery or Devotion does not interfere with the Affairs of State. There is no Similitude between the Maxims of *Venice* and *Rome*, but in the Protection granted in both Cities to the Courtenans; there being no People that leſs reſemble each other, eſpecially as to Matters of Superſtition, and the Authority of the Monks.

As to the Authority of the Monks, they tell a very comical Story here, which lately happened at *Meſſina*. The Conſul of *Holland* reſiding at that Place, had a very pretty Daughter of ſixteen or ſeventeen Years of Age, whom the Devotees took it into their Heads to make a Saint, ſaying, They could not bear the Thought that ſo lovely a Creature ſhould ever fall a Prey to the Devil. To put her into the right Path, and to open the Way for her to Heaven, they reſolved to perſuade her to quit her Parents; and, in order to render that Action the more meritorious, to rob them at the ſame Time. They quoted five or ſix *Spaniſh* Divines to her, who gave leave to a Daughter to rob her Father when he

he was a Protestant, and when she left him to retire to a Monastery. The young Woman, after some Consideration, being convinced of the Piety and Sanctity of the Robbery, only wanted an Opportunity to put it in Execution. Two reverend Capuchin Fathers lent her their Assistance; they went often to the Collection that was made at the Consul's House, who gave them Alms, very far from imagining what a Trick they intended to put upon him. Mean Time the Disciples of St. *Francis* carried off some Apparel, or other Things of the young Catechumen's every Day; and for this purpose the large Wallets in the Sleeves of their Robes were of very great Service. At last, when they had packed up all the Cloaths, the new Convert stole a Purse full of Pieces of Gold, and eloped. It was not long ere her Parents heard of her. No one can express their Surprize when they knew their Daughter's Project, and the Cause of her Escape; but their only Remedy was Patience.

The new Saint was admitted a Nun; and she made a Vow never to entertain a Love-Passion, but to be obedient to the Humours of a fantastical old Shrew, and to keep no Money, but to give it all to the Fryars *.

For near three Years together the whole Talk at *Messina* was about this Holy Convert; a Collection had been already made, which amounted to near an hundred thousand Crowns, the Sum necessary for canonizing her after Death. Many a Fryar, when in the Pulpit, used her Conversion as a Pretence to declaim against all the *Nazarene* Protestants: They foretold the entire Ruin of *England* and *Holland*; and actually bestowed some Compliments and Rheto-

* The three Vows of the Nuns, are Chastity, Obedience, and Poverty.

rical

rical Flourishes on the Pretender, assuring him that he would be placed on the Throne as soon as God had put all the *English* to Death, as a Punishment for their Rebellion; so that it would be then in his Power to carry over as many Monks with him as he pleased, who would also be of great Use to re-people the Country.

While this blessed Nun was the Talk of all *Sicily*, while every Mother was quoting her for an Example to her Daughter, when they were ready as it were to cut out her old Cloaths into Scapularies and Relics, she vanished all on a sudden. It was thought at first that she was concealed from human Sight by a Miracle, while she was conversing with St. *Rose* or St. *Clara*; but since she did not appear again, it was the Opinion of an able Divine, that as she had for some Time past no more Grace than what was barely sufficient, she had played some Frolic, that Sort of sufficient Grace not always sufficing; and that they must wait for a Motion of efficacious Grace to produce her Return. Though the Divine seemed to talk rationally, the Inquisition thought his Reasoning dangerous, and he had like to have been severely punished for a Jansenist. As for the fair Saint, she returned to *Holland* in a *Rotterdam* Vessel; and, in order to make Use of efficacious Grace, she obeyed the first Commandment of God, and begged Pardon of her Family for her Disobedience. The Bishop being mortified and touched to the Quick, when he heard that one of his Ewe-Lambs was strayed, alarmed the whole City of *Messina*; and it was as much as the Governor himself coul do, with all his Authority, to protect the Consul's Person; for his House was searched all over, and his Domestics examined. But after a great deal of Enquiry, the Bishop was forced to arm himself with Patience, and to make himself as easy at the

Elopement

Elopement of his Nun, as the Conſul was for the Rape of his Daughter.

Fare thee well, dear *Monceca*, and let me hear from thee.

LETTER LVII.

From AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris, *to* JACOB BRITO, *at* Venice.

THY Letters upon the Manners and Cuſtoms of the *Venetians*, gave me a real Pleaſure. I admire their Wiſdom in ſetting ſuch narrow Limits to the Ambition and Fanaticiſm of the Monks; but the Rule which I think the moſt rational of all, is that which exempts ſuch Books and Writings as are printed and publiſhed in the Dominions of the Republic, from the Cognizance of any of the Eccleſiaſtical Tribunals whatever. That is a ſure Method to keep the People always in a State of Independancy, and to give them an Averſion to Superſtition.

The Ideas of the moſt illuſtrious Men become common to every private Man, and the Learned do not loſe their Time in endeavouring to perfect the Underſtanding of all their Fellow-Citizens, when the Liberty of Inſtructing is left to the one, and that of Improving to the other. The Ambition of the Monks, and their Care to ſuppreſs every thing that might be pleaded againſt them, have deprived us of a thouſand Maſter-pieces. How many excellent Books were either entirely ſuppreſſed or caſtrated by the Bigots, before Printing was invented!

vented! We ought to think ourselves happy that this curious Art has put a Check to their Knavery. Had Books been ever so little a-while in their Power, we should scarce perhaps have had any other Historians or Authors, than some miserable *Nazarene* Scribblers. The *Conformities of St.* Francis *to* Jesus Christ, and the *Annals* of some Monks would have taken the Place of *Titus Livy* and *Sallust:* And if a sovereign Pontiff could have had his Will, that first-rate Writer, the Prince and Monarch of Historians, would have been intirely suppressed. That Pontiff, named *Gregory* *, condemned this Work to the Flames. What a Misfortune would it have been to Mankind, dear *Brito*, if this *Gregory*'s Cotemporaries had been as mad as he was! Malice and Hypocrisy are the most mortal Enemies of Learning, which enrages them because it takes off their Mask, and shews their Deformity.

When Mankind seemed to have forgot the Use of their natural Reason, the Monks and the Priests, who were the only Persons that copied the Manuscripts, sold them at an excessive Price, and took Care to strike out every Thing that might give any Light into their Frauds. They would undoubtedly have wholly suppressed certain Books if we had not prevented them: For being scattered through all *Greece* and *Italy*, we had those MSS. as well as they; and it being impossible to hide them intirely, they contented themselves with taking out whole Pieces, and substituting others sometimes in their Room. We even to this Time see daily Examples of these Monkish Superstitions; one half of the Works of *Horace*, *Juvenal*, *Ovid*, *&c.* is wanting in the Editions which have been published

* *Gregory* I. surnamed *the Great.*

by the Monks: And if several others did not preserve those Master-pieces entire, we should quickly lose those last Treasures of Antiquity for good and all.

I own to thee, dear *Brito*, that I cannot imagine how *Lucretius* happened to come down to us intire; I do not know who were the Transcribers that were so exact in preserving him. If they were the Monks that we are obliged to for it, I heartily forgive them for one Quarter of their Knaveries; not that I approve of that Poet's pernicious Sentiments concerning the Deity; for, dear *Brito*, may those perish who have not the profoundest Veneration for the Divine Being: But the Rest of his Works is so complete, so beautiful, and so diversified, that it would have been a sad Thing to have been deprived of it intirely.

By Chance the Works *Petronius* are also transmitted to us almost intire. We have likewise recovered some other Fragments of several Authors; and one Day perhaps we may be so happy as to discover *Tacitus* and *Titus Livy*, without any Chasms, and in their Perfection. It is assured my many People, that the Grand Signior has this last Historian complete in his Library. I have heard this Fact affirmed as true by a great many People, but I can assure thee that I know the contrary, and can speak of it with a great deal of Certainty.

Lewis XIV. always vigilant to promote his own Glory, was willing that the World should be obliged to him for all the Works of *Titus Livy*, if it is true that they could be come at; and he sent to M. *de Feriol*, his Ambassador at the Porte, to offer any Money for the *Titus Livy* which was said to be in the Library of the Seraglio. M. *de Feriol* applied to the Vizier, who spoke about it to the Grand Signior. The latter made some Scruple, for they

they thought then at the Porte that it was not proper for the MS. to be compared and examined whether it was more complete than the Work we have. M. *de Feriol* was not discouraged at the Miscarriage of the first Attempt, but got somebody to speak to the Librarian, and offered him a hundred thousand Crowns if he would only be pleased to let him have the MS. for a Time, and give Leave for the transcribing of such Passages as were wanting in the printed Copies of that Historian; which done, the Book might have been replaced in the Library, and the Passages stole out not perceived. This Proposal prodigiously pleased the Librarian, who thought a hundred thousand Crowns worth his Acceptance, and promised to deliver the Book; but the Cream of the Jest was, that after a good deal of Search, there was no such MS. to be found. So far was a *Titus Livy* from being found intire among the Grand Signior's Books, that there was not so much as one of the Copies to be found which we have of that Author, or at least if there was, the Librarian did not think proper to declare it. Being sorry that he did not touch the hundred thousand Crowns, he made Answer that after a Search he did not find what was wanted. I know that it may be supposed that the Librarian after reflecting upon the Hazard which he ran, might alter his Opinion. This indeed is not absolutely impossible; but I know on the other Hand that an hundred thousand Crowns must be an extraordinary Temptation to a *Turk*, who is used to run all Risques for Money.

What is wanting of this Historian is so much regretted in *France*, that I am sure two hundred thousand Crowns would not be grudged there for a complete Copy of him, and the Money would easily come in again, by Subscriptions from several Gen-

tlemen of the Kingdom, who would be willing to have Copies of the same.

Wouldest thou think, dear *Brito*, that in a Country where good Authors are so much valued, the Monks have nevertheless found Means to establish a Sort of Inquisition against Bookselling? All Books by which they think themselves hurt, are proscribed and prohibited under grievous Penalties. They enjoin Penance in the Confession-Chairs upon those who read them, and stir up the Magistrates to join with them. It seems as if it were more dangerous barely to write in a Book that a Monk is commonly a Knave, than to publish a System of Atheism, or any Work *contra bonos mores*. But for all the Bustle they make, as soon as a Book is printed in any Part of *Europe*, if it be good for any Thing it is immediately sold at *Paris*, and sooner too than in any other Part of *Europe*. The Prohibitions, issued to hinder the Sale of them, do but raise the Price and promote the Vend of them to a very great Degree; for the Hawkers take Care to furnish the Beaux, the Lawyers, and the Courtiers with them; the very Ladies are so fond of reading prohibited Books, that they have them brought to their Toilets as Appurtenances to their Dressing; and while the Milliner is employed in *erecting the gallant Edifice of their Hair*, some well-beloved Friend, fine Gentleman, or a Lover, reads certain Pages with an audible Voice.

Thou wilt perhaps be curious to know the principal Motive of the Persecution against Books, and which are those that are most severely proscribed. Though all Pieces that have a Tendency to cure the People of Superstition are generally prohibited, yet there is not so much Care taken to hinder the Sale of them, as of those which favour Jansenism or Molinism;

linism; and though they can no more stop the Vend of the latter than of the former, yet they do what they can to suppress them. I own, dear *Brito*, that it would be for the public Service that those Works were suppressed, which are commonly but a Series of Impostures, Calumnies, and gross Railing. The Jansenist Authors especially are famous for Disputes of this Kind, for when Arguments fail them, they supply the Want thereof with Invective. They give extravagant Pay to a Man who twice a Week publishes a printed * Sheet throughout *Europe*, in which he is obliged to observe every Man who does not believe that the Water in which a Piece of St. *Paris*'s Slippers has been boiled, is a Cure for all Sorts of Distempers.

I have often mentioned the Molinists and the Jansenists to thee; but never told thee that it is impossible to live in this Country, without espousing either the one or the other. Such is the Spirit of Caballing that prevails at *Paris*, that were a Man of *Spinosa*'s Sect he cannot be neuter. The Jansenists and the Molinists refuse none; they do not oblige such as are admitted into their Body, to make Profession of their Faith at Entrance, and only demand that they swear a mortal Hatred to their Adversaries. Notwithstanding the Necessity there is for a Man to list himself under one of the two Standards, I must tell thee, dear *Brito*, that I have thought myself obliged to look with very great Indifference on the Disputes of a Religion of which I think the Principles bad. Nevertheless, though it is well known that I am a *Jew* born at *Constantinople*, unknown to the Jesuits, that I am a Man of no Ambition, and take no Pleasure but in the Study of Philosophy, yet two

* *The Nouvelles Ecclesiastiques*.

or three Persons who are my familiar Acquaintance here, have taken it into their Heads that I am a Molinist. *We see*, they often say, *your Hatred of St.* Paris: *You openly condemn his Miracles: The Convulsionaries, in your Opinion, are Fanatics that ought to be sent to the Galleys. The Perspiration*, say you, *which would arise from the Fatigue, from the Bastinado, and from the painful Exercise of rowing, might purge those sharp Humours, which floating in their Blood occasion their Phrenzy. You would fain see the Abbé* Becheran *and the Chevalier* Follard *metamorphosed into Galley-Slaves, recover their Reason by a tedious Penance exercised in all the Parts of the* Mediterranean. *What*, replied I, *is the wishing that Imposture may be punished the same Thing as to wish that Hatred and Ambition may be disarmed?* For, dear *Brito*, this is the true Picture of the Jansenists and the Molinists. The former are dangerous Impostors; The latter are devoured by a Lust for Dominion, and a Thirst for Revenge. They are all equally to be dreaded; but their Faults are different.

The Jansenist is ill-natured, and a Bigot from his Cradle, and sucks the Spirit of Rebellion and Sedition with his Mother's Milk. The first Words which he learns to speak are Invectives and Scandal against the Pontiffs; and the elder he grows the more he hates them. Under the external Appearance of mistaken Piety, he conceals a base and dangerous Mind. Being a wicked *Nassaume*, a rebellious Subject, a perfidious Friend, a Parent without Friendship, three Words which he is eternally repeating, serve for a specious Pretext to all his Crimes. *The Liberties of the* Gallican *Church* is the Cabalistical Cant of the Jansenists Sect. These are no odious Sins which those Words do not cancel, and which they do not also authorize.

The

The ambitious Molinist wants to command wherever he comes. Like the high Winds he overturns whatever makes Resistance, and spares whatever yields to him. He banishes the haughty Jansenist by a Letter de Cachet. In vain is he supported by the City and the Provinces; for like the Oak, whose deep Roots cannot save it from being overthrown by a Storm, he perishes; while the Libertine, the Atheist, and the Debauchee, which like feeble Reeds bend and seem to yield, are safe, and perfectly tranquil. It is not the Crime nor the Criminal which the Molinist hates, but the Rival of his Greatness, or what may become such. No Person is innocent in his Sight, as soon as he is in a Capacity of being hurtful to him. Too much Learning and Virtue attract his Hatred. He is for fewer good Qualities, and more Obedience. He is good-natured, sincere, polite, complaisant, and a downright honest Man when alone; but when he acts in concert with his Brethren, he is proud, haughty, insupportable, a Tyrant and a Persecutor. One half of the Misfortunes of this Kingdom is owing to the Ambition of those who are now called *Molinists*. They formerly persecuted the *Nazarenes*, to whom *France* was obliged for her Glory*; for they had placed the greatest King in the Universe upon her Throne, but Wickedness plucked him from it, and the Consequence of that Wickedness was the Ruin of that Monarch's Benefactors.

Thou perceivest, dear *Brito*, the Judgment that ought to be formed of the Sects of the Jansenists and Molinists. The Members of the first are dangerous, and those of the second are no less so, the very Moment that they act in common and

* The *Protestants*.

in a Body. But after all, thou wilt conceive a false Notion of the *French*, if thou dost imagine, that either those who are here called *Molinists*, or those who are called *Jansenists*, are much disturbed at those Cabals. These Names are assumed here, as I told thee, because it is the Fashion to declare either for the one Party or the other. Therefore when I talk to thee of the Molinists and the Jansenists, I only mean them who are at the Head of those Sects, who foment Division in the State, and abuse the Goodness, Lenity, and Clemency of their Prince. If ever a Prince is pardonable for too much Severity, it is when such Severity tends to make his Subjects perfectly easy. If in the Beginning of those Troubles the Jansenists had been severely punished for their Restlessness, and the Molinists had been checked in their Ambition, every Man might have thought what he pleased both of *Jansenius* and *Molina*; and perhaps by this Time neither of them would have been remembered.

Fare thee well, dear *Brito*, and go on to prosper.

LETTER LVIII.

From AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris, *to* ISAAC ONIS, *a Caraite, at* Smyrna, *formerly a Rabbi, at* Constantinople.

I WAS glad, dear *Isaac*, to hear of thy Arrival at *Smyrna*, where, thanks be to the God of our Fathers, thou art safe from those Dangers to which thy Change of Religion did expose thee. As soon as thou art arrived at *Cairo*, let me hear from thee, and make me perfectly easy in my Mind.

The

The Particulars which thou gaveſt me of the Impoſtor *Sabbathai* have confirmed me in the Opinion, that I ought to place no Confidence in, and give no Credit to, Things which I do not know from full Evidence. An old Merchant of *Provence*, to whom I ſhewed thy Letter, and who in his Youth ſpent ſeveral Years at *Smyrna*, told me upon the Mention of *Sabbathai*, a very pleaſant Adventure, which happened to a Couple of *Engliſhmen* who were ſettled at *Conſtantinople*. They had advanced conſiderable Sums to certain *Jews*, and were afraid they ſhould loſe their Money. While they were uneaſy to have it again, Curioſity on the one Hand, and Intereſt on the other, determined them to carry their Complaint to *Sabbathai Sevi*, when he was a Priſoner in the Caſtle of the *Dardanelles*. The Impoſtor heard them with great Gravity and Good-nature, and by the following Letter ordered the *Jews* to pay them.

LETTER,

To you of the Jewiſh *Nation, who wait the Coming of the* Meſſiah, *and the Salvation of* Iſrael, *Peace without End.*

'I AM informed that you owe Money to ſeveral *Engliſh* Gentlemen: We think it but juſt to order you to pay your Debts; which if you refuſe to do, and are diſobedient to us in this Inſtance, know that you ſhall not enter with me into my Kingdom.'

The *Engliſhmen* thanked *Sabbathai Sevi* in Terms of great Reſpect, and taking Advantage of his Impoſture, and the *Jews* Weakneſs, they had their Money again.

There happened another comic Scene to *Sabbathai Sevi* during his Imprisonment, which proved afterwards his intire Ruin, and discovered his Knavery. One *Nehemiah Cohen*, a *Jew*, that understood the *Hebrew*, *Syriac*, and *Chaldaean* Languages; and was as well versed in the Cabala of the Rabbies as *Sabbathai* himself, was covetous of a Share in the Reputation of that Impostor, and therefore desired a Conference with him. Their Conversation was at first very tranquil, but after having tried in vain to settle Matters on such a Footing as might be agreeable to both, they grew warm and fell into a violent Passion. *Is it not true*, said *Cohen*, *that according to the Scriptures there are to be two* Messiahs; *the first poor, despised, a Preacher of the Law, a Servant of the Second, and his Forerunner; the Second, rich, powerful, and victorious? I am content*, continued he, *to be* Ben-Ephraim, *or the poor* Messiah. *What Prejudice is this to your Glory? Will not you be as much* Messiah *the Conqueror?* After many Debates, *Sabbathai Sevi* consented that *Cohen* should be the poor *Messiah*; and their Dispute was just at an End, when *Cohen* thought fit to reproach *Sabbathai Sevi* for having been too hasty in giving himself out to be the powerful *Messiah*, before he, the poor *Messiah*, that was to be his Forerunner, had made himself known to the World. *Sabbathai* took it amiss that *Cohen* should be so forward as to criticise his Conduct. *I cashier you*, said he to him, *you are not, and never shall be* Ben-Ephraim. *And I*, replied *Cohen*, *cashier you in my turn, and promise you that I will hinder you from being owned as* Ben-David. Then the Dispute grew hot between these two Impostors, and from hard Words they proceeded to Blows. The *Turks* who had the Guard of *Sabbathai Sevi*, and who had heard this pleasant Conversation by listening

listening at the Door of his Prison, ran and separated the Combatants. *Coben* took a quick Revenge; for he told the chief Ministers at the Porte, that *Sabbathai Sevi* gained Ground daily upon the Affections of the *Jews*, who had the same Esteem for him as ever, notwithstanding his Knavery and Imposture. We have often had Monsters among us, who by abusing the Credulity of their Brethren, in order to satisfy their Ambition or their Avarice, have assumed the Title of *Deliverer of the* Jewish *Nation*, and the august Name of the *Messiah*.

In the Reign of the Emperor *Theodosius* the Younger, there was a *Jew* in *Candia* who did our Nation much more Mischief than this vile Impostor *Sabbathai*. This *Jew* called himself *Moses*, and he affirmed that he was the very Prophet *Moses* who conducted the *Israelites* in the Wilderness, and rescued them from the *Egyptian* Bondage. He spent a whole Year from Place to Place in the Island of *Candia*, where he preached in all the Synagogues, and promised all the *Jews*, of whom there were great Numbers in that Island, to carry them over Sea without a Ship, and to lead them into the very Heart of *Judæa*, without so much as wetting their Feet. The Day was actually fixed for their setting out, when being followed by a vast Multitude of People, he went to a very high Beach, and commanded those that were foremost, to cast themselves into the Sea as soon as they came to the Brink of it, without any Fear, assuring them that they would run no Danger. The silly People deluded by this Villain, actually threw themselves headlong into the Sea, where they had been justly punished for their Credulity, if some Fishermen that happened to be there at the Time, had not saved them from the Waves,

and hindered those that came upon the Heels of the others from following their Example.

Our Nation is not the only one, dear *Isaac*, that has been abused by Impostors. Where is the Kingdom, where the Religion that has not been productive of Seducers? The *Nazarenes* ought not to upbraid us with our false *Messiahs*: Have not they People among them every Day, who under the Pretence of Religion, and the Veil of Piety, plunge them into the wildest Errors? *Sabbathai Sevi* never made so much Impression upon the Minds of the *Jews*, as St. *Paris* has done upon the *French*. No *Israelite* was ever so much infatuated and blinded, as to mistake the Fits of Phrenzy for the visible Marks of the Grace of God, employing a Parcel of Madmen to declare his Holy Will. We have sometimes placed our Belief in Men that promised us Things that were tempting; and such Pleasure has their Doctrine given us that we have even helped to deceive ourselves. But they who seduce the *Nazarenes*, preach Nothing to them but Troubles and Calamities; all the Convulsionaries at *Paris* foretel the End of the World, the dethronings of the Pontiffs, the Destruction of States: So that a Man must have a strong Biass to Fanaticism, to chuse such Prophets for his Guides.

I know, dear *Isaac*, that every Thing that is extraordinary strikes and captivates the Minds of the People; though the *Nazarene* Popish Countries are more subject to Superstition than others. But in *England* and *Holland* you scarce meet with any that are possessed; because the Devils take few Walks in those Countries. For as in those Dominions no Fryar can shew in public what Power his Holiness gives him over Hell, *Beelzebub* and *Astaroth* do not trade thither in Company, or at least no-body talks of them.

Some

Some Days ago I received a Letter from the *Hague*, with an Account that a Tradesman of that Place complained of a Spirit which came in the Night-time, and tore all his Cloaths and Furniture to Pieces. The common People, who are always credulous, readily believed it, and crouded to the Tradesman's House, who shewed them some of the Pieces of Stuff and Linen that had been cut and torn off. He told a thousand Stories more surprizing than all this of the Mischievousness of this Spirit. The High Bailiff, informed of the Affair, ordered that Nothing more should be laid in the Spirit's Way to be torn, and enjoined the Tradesman to talk no more of the Imp; nay he gave the latter to understand that he should be answerable for the Folly of the former. Since that Time the Spirit has decamped, and the Tradesman now lays the Blame upon the Rats, of what he imputed at first to this invisible Substance.

The *Nazarene* Papists pretend, that this Devil was one of the best-natured Sort, or else all the Authority of the Magistrates would not have banished him. They say there are a Sort of Spirits very easy to be laid; and that, without having Recourse to the Ritual, or Book of Ceremonies, an Air of *Quinault*'s Opera is of as much avail as an Exorcism of the Church. Upon this Occasion they quote one *Ignatius Loyola*, who, in order to drive the Devil out of the Body of a Woman that was possessed, and desired his Help, made Use of that Verse of *Virgil*;

Speluncam Dido Dux & Trojanus eandem.

In the same Cave the *Trojan* Chief
And *Dido* shelter took.

He

He had scarce pronounced these Words, but the Woman was thrown flat upon the Ground, and the Devil left her, begging heartily that he might not be shut up in the infernal Cave. He obtained leave to go wherever he pleased, provided he never possessed any Man more *.

You must own, dear *Isaac*, that this is a pleasant Way of driving out Devils. If one single Verse of *Virgil* has the Virtue to banish a Dæmon, I do not doubt but were that Poet to recite his whole *Æneid*, it would be powerful enough to drive them all out of Hell, and to purge it in short from their detestable Race. He would thereby do great Service to the Authors, his Comrades, and especially to *Horace*, *Catullus*, *Tibullus*, *Propertius*, and *Petronius*, who being voluptuous by Nature, and brought up in good Company, cannot but think that of the Devils a little too obstreporous.

Now I am mentioning good Authors, a Hawker brought me a new Book †, which I have read with a great deal of Pleasure: It is a Translation of four Epistles in Verse, written by the illustrious *Pope*, the best Poet of *England*. The Original is good, and so is the Translation; for though the latter be in Prose, yet the Translator has therein preserved the Spirit and Beauty of the *English* Verses. The Subject of these Epistles is important, for they all treat of Metaphysical Matters, which are explained in a clear and concise Manner.

I. The first treats of the Nature and State of Man with Regard to the Universe. The Author therein proves that Man is not an imperfect Being, that he is proportioned to the Place and Rank

* *Joannes Christianus Fromman de Fascinatione*, lib. iii. part. ix. cap. iv. num. xv. p. 949.

† *Essay on Man*, by Mr. *Pope*.

which

which he holds in the Creation, and to the Ends and Relations which are known to him. He founds the present Happiness of Human Beings partly upon the Ignorance of future Events, partly upon the Hopes of future Happiness, and condemns their unjust Complaints against Providence as a great Crime.

II. The second teaches Man to know his Nature and Condition considered with regard to himself. It opens the Spring and Cause of all our Actions, of which Self-Love and Reason are the two Principles; and shews how much our Knowledge is circumscibed.

Superior Beings, *says the Poet*, when of late they saw
A mortal Man unfold all Nature's Law,
Admir'd such Wisdom in an earthly Shape,
And shew'd a *Newton*, as we shew an *Ape*.

I know not, dear *Isaac*, whether this Sentiment be as taking with you, as it is with me; but I think there is something in it that is grand, sublime, and yet natural. It is also well expressed in the *French*:

III. What follows is a Description proper for chastising the Pride of Man; and I think that all good Judges cannot but admire it.

Has God, thou Fool! work'd solely for thy Good,
Thy Joy, thy Pastime, thy Attire, thy Food?
Who for thy Table feeds the wanton Fawn,
For him as kindly spreads the flow'ry Lawn.
Is it for Thee the Lark ascends and sings?
Joy tunes his Voice, Joy elevates his Wings:
Is it for thee the Linnet pours his Throat?
Loves of his own, and Raptures swell the Note.
The bounding Steed you pompously bestride.
Shares with his Lord the Pleasure and the Pride.

Is

Is Thine alone the Seed that strows the Plain?
The Birds of Heav'n shall vindicate their Grain.
Thine the full Harvest of the Golden Year?
Part pays, and justify, the deserving Steer.

There, dear *Isaac*, you have one of the finest Pieces in Poetry. What different Images, what a Variety, what Stretch of Imagination! The Poet offers all Nature to our Sight; and the Philosopher demonstrates to us, that we have no more Share in it than the other Creatures. Do not we see, in short, as soon as we divest ourselves of our Prejudices, that nothing was made intirely either for us, or the others? The Passage I have just now quoted is in the third Epistle, wherein the Author examines the Nature and Condition of Man with regard to Society, gives a Detail of the several Centuries and Ages of the World, and shews the Origin of the first Societies since the Creation, which were formed by Instinct, and cemented by Reason.

IV. The last of these four Epistles treats of that Happiness which Men court with so much Eagerness. The Poet proves that all may be happy in what State soever Heaven has placed them; and that in order to attain to Felicity and Tranquility, there is nothing wanting but Good Sense in the Mind, and Sincerity in the Heart. The Poet says,

Ask of the Learn'd the Way, the Learn'd are blind;
This bids to serve, and that to shun Mankind:
Some place the Bliss in Action, some in Ease;
Those call it Pleasure, and Contentment these.
Who thus define it, say they, more or less
Than this, that Happiness is Happiness?
One grants his Pleasure is but Rest from Pain,
One doubts of all, one owns even Virtue vain.

Thus,

Thus, dear *Isaac*, thou hast the true Picture of our Blindness. We dispute about the Definition of what is capable of making us happy; we ramble a great way about, in quest of what we have already in our own Reach, *Virtue*, *Health*, and *Necessaries*. There is true Happiness; whoever enjoys those three Things, is happy in Perfection; but as the two latter are not absolutely at our Command, God has given a Power to the first, to comfort us for the Loss and Deprivation of the other two. So that, dear *Isaac*, a Man is never extremely unhappy, so long as he is virtuous. Wisdom does not produce the ridiculous Effects which the Stoics ascribed to it, but it is a sweet Comforter, that takes off very much the Bitterness of all our Anxieties.

Farewell, my dear *Isaac*, and let me hear from thee speedily.

LETTER LIX.

From JACOB BRITO, *at* Venice, *to* AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris.

THIS, in all Probability, is the last Letter I shall write to thee from *Venice*; for I reckon to set out the latter-end of this Week for *Ravenna*, and from thence to proceed afterwards to *Naples*. In my Way I shall pass through *Loretto*, and see that Church so much boasted of by the *Nazarenes*, and so much frequented by their Pilgrims. The *Roman* Pontiffs have granted so many Indulgences to those who go to visit this Temple, that by this Means they can deliver

deliver the Souls of all their Ancestors out of Purgatory.

The Courtezans of *Venice*, whose Occupations will not permit them to go in a Pilgrimage to *Loretto*, make Use of another Expedient for the Relief of the Dead. They make Choice of one Day in the Week, which they devote to the Relief of the Souls in Purgatory: That Day they arm themselves with an austere Countenance, putting off Sports and Merriments till the next; every thing in their House has the Face of Melancholy, and as their Good-will alone is not sufficient to engage the Monks to pray to God, they say very seriously to such Gallants as come to their Houses, *Sir, you will be so good as to pay me more than usual To-day, because what I do is for the Souls in Purgatory.* Then they produce several Acquittances for Prayers, which are hung on a File by their Bed-side, to prove that they do not cheat, and that the Money they have received is laid out in Prayers and pious Foundations. After this Prelude is over, they work to some purpose for the Salvation of Souls. When they have not Custom enough upon the Days set apart for such a good Work, they endeavour to obtain some Prayers for the Souls of their Kindred *gratis*. And indeed those whom they employ in this Office, having a reciprocal Need of their Assistance, they are not barbarous to one another, but easily compound the Matter in such a Way that they have no Need to disburse any thing.

Thou wilt think the Zeal and Devotion of these Courtezans extraordinary, but at *Venice* Debauchery is reconciled to Religion in People of all Ranks: There is scarce a Monk, a Priest, Abbé, or my Lord, but keeps a Mistress. When a Man is not rich enough to keep a kind Lass to himself, he clubs with

with some Friend; and if the Purse of both is not sufficient, they take in a Third for a Partner. In all amorous Contracts, the Damsel takes care to reserve one Day of the Week to herself, in honour of some Saint.

In this Country there are a great many Mothers who prostitute their own Daughters from a Principle of Conscience, saying, they do it to furnish them with an Opportunity of getting Money, that they may have wherewithal to turn Nuns. Is not that, dear *Monsua*, a pleasant way of becoming Virgins? The old *Romans* never thought of making their Vestal Dames perform a Noviciate in the Street *Saburra*: Nor is the Chastity of the *Venetian* Nuns, Proof against the strongest Attacks; their Moral has nothing in it that is rigid; they are more happy and free than many other Women that are of Quality; they receive what Visitors they please in their Parlour, and their Conversation has nothing in it that is austere; they hear the Monks when they have not better Business; yet they do not resolve upon it till they are reduced to the last Extremity, and when they have absolutely lost all Hopes of getting better Cullies. Not but there are Fryars at *Venice*, whose fresh Complexion and jocund Airs, are capable of producing some tender Motion in a young Woman's Heart; but the Fate of the Monks seems upon the whole, to be more unhappy at *Venice* than in the other Cities of *Italy*; however, if they are not so much esteemed there, they have as much, and more Liberty. During the Carnival, they enjoy all the Pleasures of it; go to the Opera, and even sing there, or play upon the Instruments in the Orchestre, whenever the Fancy takes them. They go to the Ridottos (Places where they Play at the famous Game

Game of *Pharo)* at which they bet and lose the Church's Money or their own. Nothing that is lawful for the most resolute Soldier to do, is disparaging to Monkish Decency at this Place, and the Priest themselves are Examples of the most infamous Debauchery. The Mistresses of the principal Clergy are proud of their Gallants, are pleased that the Public should know them, and are as indiscreet in their Intrigues as the *French* Fops are in boasting of the Ladies' Favours.

As I was going one Day through a Street near the Square of St. *Mark*, I saw a young Woman at a Window, whom I thought so pretty, that I asked a *Venetian* of my Acquaintance who she was? *She is*, said he, *la gentil Donna de l' Eminentissimo Patriarcha di Venitia. i. e.* The charming Mistress of his Eminency the Patriarch of *Venice*. I made, as thou must well imagine, dear *Monceca*, a profound Obeisance to Madam the Patriarchess. About thirty Steps from thence, I also perceived another very amiable Lady, and asking her Name likewise, said my Friend, *Il primo Canonico della Chiesa di San Marco e Schiavo de la sua Bellezza. i. e.* The chief Canon of St. *Mark's* Church is a Slave to her Charms. Another Bow thou mayst be sure I paid to the Mistress of the chief Canon of St. *Mark*. I believed I should have no more Occasion to ask a third Question, but I saw another Woman, whom I thought so perfect a Beauty, that I could not help repeating the Question; *Is this too*, said I, *the Property of the Church? You are not mistaken*, said he; *Questa bellissima Donna é la Puttana del Premicerio. i. e.* This pretty Lady is the Whore of the Dean of St. *Mark's*. *But whence comes it*, said I to my Friend, *that all the Women of this Street are fallen to the Share of the Clergy? It is* replied he, *because they live*

almost

almost all hereabouts, and are very glad to be near what they love. Those Ladies whom you see, have great Interest with the Clergy, insomuch that all the young Priests make their Court to them with very great Assiduity.

It happened some Time ago, that the Patriarch's Mistress, whom we just now saw, had a Quarrel with the Mistress of the Legate of the sovereign Pontiff, which was an Affair wherein all the Clergy were engaged and divided. The Fryars took Part with the Legate, and the secular Priests with the Patriarch. These two illustrious Lovers entered into the Quarrel of their Concubines with very great Warmth; and that the Public might not know the Ground of their Hatred, they pleaded some Punctilios of Honour for a Pretext, which gave them a Handle to thwart each other upon all Occasions. The Senate, which hated those Discussions, and was very studious to keep up Peace and Union in the Republic, signified to the Court of *Rome*, that they would do well to send another Legate to *Venice*, which was accordingly complied with. The old Legate being recalled, took Signiora *Clara* along with him, and settled her in a very fine House at *Rome*, where they pass their Time happily.

The Legates or Ambassadors of the sovereign Pontiff, are apt to raise Troubles, and foment Divisions in the Dominions to which their Master sends them. The abominable Slaughter on St. *Bartholomew*'s Day, was owing to the pernicious Counsels of a Legate *, sent to *Charles* IX. King of *France*; who concerted with that perfidious Ambassador the Death of the King of *Navarre* †, and of all the *Nazarenes* who were not Papists. The *Roman* Le-

* The Cardinal *Alexandrin*.

† Who was afterwards *Henry* IV. King of *France*.

gate did not care that the King's Marriage with the Princess *Margaret*, should be made Use of as a Pretext for it; but *Charles* IX. having convinced him that it was a sure Way to be revenged of their Enemies, he consented to it without any Scruple, every thing being reckoned good and lawful, provided they could cut the Throats of the Adversaries of the Court of *Rome*.

Certain *Nazarenes*, whom I have talked with about this Action, have endeavoured to excuse the Legate, and to throw the Blame upon the King. But the Fact is authentically proved by an unexceptionable Person, who knew it from Persons that had a Hand in it *.

Is there any thing so shocking, dear *Monceca*, as to make the most sacred Things subservient to Murder and Slaughter, and to cover the most pernicious Designs with the Cloak of Friendship and Kindred? What a Marriage, just God, was this of the King of *Navarre*! The Furies lighted up *Hymen*'s Torch, and Horror, Rage, Cruelty, Despair, and Impiety presided at the Ceremony. *I Consent*, said *Charles* IX. to the Legate, *to conclude the Marriage with the King of* Navarre, *for no other Reason but to be revenged on mine Enemies,—and to chastise such great Rebels.* This King, who thirsted for the Blood of his Subjects, offered to give the perfidious Ambassador a Ring, to insure the Crime which he was contriving. *But*, says an *Italian* Historian, *he re-*

* His Holiness added, that when the News of the Transaction on St. *Bartholomew*'s Day, came to *Rome*, the Cardinal *Alexandrin* said, *God be praised! The King of* France *has kept his Word with me.* His Holiness said, he knew all this by being at that time Auditor to the said Cardinal, and his Companion in the whole Journey. *Cardinal* Ossat's *Letter from* Rome, 22 *Sept.* 1599.

fused

fused to take Pledges for the Security of the Word of so great a King; though, after St. Bartholomew's *Day,* Charles IX. *sent him that Ring as a Token of his Adherence to his Oaths* *.

Are these, dear *Monceca*, Oaths that are fit to be put in Execution? The Performance of them is even more execrable than the Promise. How happy would it have been for *France*, if *Charles* IX. had entertained the same Opinion of the Legate, as a *French* Poet put into the Mouth of one of his Heroes:

——— *Non, je ne promis rien.*
Le Legat † *Instrument d'une indigne Foiblesse,*
S' ompara de mon Cœur, en dicta la Promesse.
S' il ne m'eût inspiré ce barbare dessein,
Mon Cœur n'auroit jamais promis du sang Humain ‡.

i. e. ——— No, I promise Nothing. The Legate, a Tool of base Folly, having won my Heart, dictated to it what I should promise. If he had not inspired me with that barbarous Design, I should never have had the Heart to make a Promise of shedding human Blood.

This Passage puts me in Mind of another by the same Author, which gives a perfect Character of the Policy of the Court of *Rome*.

C'est ainsi, qu'en perdant la Pere par le Fils,
Rome devient fatale à tous ses Ennemis §.

* The Life of Pope *Pius* V. by *Girolamo Catena*, written in *Italian*, and printed at *Rome* by *Alexander Gardano* in 1588. *Catena* says, that *Charles* IX. caused this Motto to be engraved on the Ring, *Nec Pietas possit mea sanguine solvi.*

† It is in the Original *Neptune.*

‡ *Crebillon* in *Idomeneus.*

§ Ditto in *Rhadamistus.*

i. e

i. e. Thus does *Rome*, by making the Son the Executioner of the Father, become fatal to all her Enemies.

The most crafty and most dangerous Policy becomes innocent among the *Romans*, and all the *Italians* in general, when it is capable of answering their Aim. Happy are those Nations, dear *Monceca*, whose Politics are only a Science to point out the Snares that Men lay for us, so as we may avoid them, and not to punish one Crime by another, and to authorize the foulest Deeds!

Another Legate, during the Wars which *Henry* IV. was obliged to sustain, before he came to the peaceable Possession of his Throne, did what he could to debauch his Majesty's Subjects and Soldiers; and for this End, employed Promises, Menaces, Intreaties, and above all Indulgences, which are the Coin that the Court of *Rome* lays out more freely than any other Species. He would fain have decoyed his General *de Anglure de Givri*, and in order to persuade him to abandon the King's Cause, he told him of his Merit, and the Reputation which he had acquired. But all his flattering Speeches served to no Purpose, *Givri*'s Loyalty to the King was always steady. The Legate perceiving that he could not shake it, exhorted him however, as he professed himself a good *Nazarene* Papist, to beg Pardon for all that was past of the sovereign Pontiff, and off him who was his Representative, giving him to understand that he desired nothing better than to grant it to him. This *Givri*, who was naturally a pleasant Droll, fell on a sudden at the Feet of the Legate, and asked for Pardon with a very contrite Air, for all the Evils that he had brought upon the *Parisians*, who were the sovereign Pontiff's Adherents. During this, the Legate waved his Right-hand over his Head, and muttered

certain

certain Words between his Teeth, which the *Nazarenes* call *Absolution*. But *Givri* interrupting him, said to him very seriously, *I beg you to grant me Absolution also for the Time to come, because I am really resolved to treat the Enemies of the King my Master even worse than ever*. Then the Legate fretting and fuming to find himself bantered, revoked the Pardon which he had just granted to *Givri*, who suffered him to take back his Absolution; and laughing in his Face, he withdrew from him, and continued loyal to his Prince *.

If all the *Nazarene* Papists had been as virtuous and as honest as this loyal Subject was, *France*, which always submitted to the Sovereigns that God set over her, had not fallen a Prey to Discord and Division. Mad Superstition in the Monastic Habit had not forced one Brother to imbrue his Hands in the Blood of another, and Religion had never served for a Cloak to Rebellion.

This is a Principle, dear *Monceca*, of which I think every honest Man, and every loyal Subject must be convinced. Though a Monarch were to turn *Turk*, the Oath of Fidelity taken to him ought to be kept sacredly. *How!* (methinks I hear some cry out) *what when they go to force the Conscience?* And can Monarchs seated on their Thrones chuse what Religion they will be of? Their Faith must be at the Choice of their Subjects: A Man must be either a Fool, or Mad, or Romantic, to maintain

* *Genu flexo supplex, & composito Vultu, Veniam se contra Parisienses admissorum petere professus est; interpositâque aliquâ morâ, quasi serio Rem gereret, postquam à Cardinali Benedictionem accepit, antequam surgeret, et am futurorum Gratiam sibi fieri petiet; nam decrevisse contra Parisienses acriùs quam antea Bellum gerere: quious dictis, cum Risu se à Cardinalis Gratiam factam revocantis conspectu subduxit.* Thuanus Tom. IV. p. 154.

ſuch an extravagant Opinion. If I were a Sovereign of a *Nazarene* Country, I would eſtabliſh a certain Temple where I would appoint candid honeſt Laymen to preach up a Syſtem of Morality, which ſhould be a Counterpoiſe to that of the Monks. How happy would it have been for *Henry* III. and his Succeſſor, if there had been ſuch Preachers at *Paris* to balance those of the League, and those that were ſent to that City by the Pontiffs and the *Spaniards!* Theſe latter being eternally at enmity with the *French*, but always overcome by them in the Time of their greateſt Diviſion, deſpairing of being ever able to bring them under, employed the Poiſon of Monkiſh Fury;

Helas! elle a des Rois egorgé le plus grand !*
Alas! it cut the Throat of the greateſt of Kings!

Fare thee well, dear *Monceca*; as ſoon as I can write thou ſhalt hear from me. May the God of our Fathers proſper the with Abundance.

* *Racine* in *Athalia:*
Helas! ils ont des Rois égaré le plus ſage!
i.e. Alas! they have miſled the wiſeſt of Kings.

LETTER

LETTER LX.

From AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris *to* ISAAC ONIS, *a Caraite, lately a Rabbi, at* Constantinople.

I MAKE no Doubt, dear *Isaac*, but thou art arrived by this Time at *Alexandria*. If thou makest any stay there before thou proceedest to *Cairo*, thou wilt do me a Pleasure to write some account to me of the Antiquities there, of which, I am assured, there is a great Number, and that Time has spared several Pieces which are still preserved intire; and many more there would have been if the Barbarity of the *Turks*, the Fury of War, and the Avarice of the Inhabitants had not proved the Ruin of a great Number of Structures which have been pulled down either from a Principle of Superstition, or from the Expectation of Gold hid in the Foundations, or in their thick Walls. A Number of Columns have been demolished in hopes of finding Medals under their Cases, like to those which had already been discovered under others. Therefore the finest Pieces of Atchitecture were inhumanly broke to pieces; and as to those that are left standing, we are only obliged to it for their unshaken Solidity.

When I was at *Constantinople*, I frequently discoursed with some *Jews* that had travelled to *Egypt*, who told me a great many Things of which I should be glad to know the Truth under thy Hand. They also assured me that the Manners of the *Ægyptians* differ in a great many Things from those of the *Turks*,

who live at *Constantinople*, and over all *Greece*. Inform me th rescre, dear *Isaac*, of all these Matters, which I shall be Master of with Certainty, when I receive the Information from a Person of thy Wisdom and Judgment. In exchange for thy Intelligence, I will endeavour to give thee some Remarks upon the Manners and Customs of the Countries which I shall travel through, after I leave *France*; for my Affairs will be soon finished at *Paris*, so that I purpose to set out from thence in a Month or two; and I shall be obliged to make a Tour into *Flanders*, and from thence I shall pass over to *England*.

I could wish that the Chevalier *de Maisin* were to accompany me in the Voyage, for I should think myself very happy if I could have so excellent a Companion. I have infinite Obligations to that Gentleman, for he helps me every Day to a thorough Knowledge of his Countrymen, and explains even the minutest Difficulties. Yesterday he carried me to the House of an Author of his Acquaintance, who is reckoned to have one of the best Pens in *France*: We found him with two other Authors in Company, and they seemed all three to be engaged in a very warm Dispute; so that they hardly took notice of us when we came into the Room. But the Chevalier *de Maisin* presenting me to his Friend, the three learned Gentlemen grew a little calmer when they saw we were come to join them. After Complements were passed, the Chevalier *de Maisin* was curious to know what the three learned Gentlemen were disputing about. 'Gentlemen, *said he*, may one ask you 'what is the Topic you are debating? Is it Metaphysics, Mathematics, or Natural Philosophy? It 'relates to Authorship, said the Chevalier's Friend, 'and by consequence is of much more Importance 'to the Republic of Literature: For the Point which

'which is of the greatest Advantage and the most 'essential to the Being of Scholars, is the Means of 'Subsistance; yet this is what the Booksellers' op-'pose; and if the Government does not make some 'Regulation for checking their Aavrice, all Authors 'must be content for the future to enjoy those trans-'parent Bodies, that shall require no Nourishment. 'Is it not surprising that a Bookseller should allow 'the Abbé *Grisanet* but six Livres a Sheet for his 'Romances? Six Livres! said one of the Authors, 'the very Abbé that was mentioned; and if you 'please M. *Tragedin*, you may reckon the correct-'ing of the Proof-sheets into the bargain. This 'is abominable! replied the Chevalier's Friend; 'you dishonour the Majesty of the Profession of an 'Author, by sinking it to six Livres per Sheet, 'including the trouble of Correcting. It were a 'hundred times better to be starved to death.

'But, M. *Tragedin*, replied the third of those 'Writers who had not yet spoke, you do not con-'sider that *Venter caret auribus*, The hungry Belly 'has no Ears. It is a very easy Matter for you to 'preach up the Grandeur and Dignity which ought 'to shine in our august Character; you have a 'tolerable Income, and may therefore defy the 'Avarice of the Booksellers: But if, as it very 'often happens with me, you had worked all the 'Day, and had taken but one Dish of Coffee, and 'that upon Tick at *Gradot*'s *, you would be 'very glad to let your Works go at the Price that 'is bid for them. Indeed you are very happy, 'M. *Poetaster*, replied the Abbé, to have Credit

* A Coffee-house at the Foot of the *Pont neuf*, the Rendezvouz of pretended Wits.

‘ at *Gradot*'s: It is now a Fortnight since I lost
‘ that same Favour; for his Wife brought me in a
‘ Bill of Two thousand nine hundred and thirty-
‘ two Dishes of Coffee, which not being able to
‘ pay, she would give me Credit no longer. What,
‘ Sir, said the Chevalier *de Maisin*, do you owe
‘ for Two thousand nine hundred and thirty-two
‘ Dishes of Coffee? Yes, replied the Author; I
‘ have not given the Coffee-man a Penny for
‘ these nine Years past, and one Dish a Day comes
‘ exactly to that Accompt, allowing for the Leap-
‘ years. I thought to have paid off the three
‘ first Years Debt out of the Money that I should
‘ get by a certain Manuscript, but not receiving
‘ half the Sum that I expected for it, I could
‘ not do it. However, I fancy, M. *Poetaster*,
‘ *continued the Author*, that you owe as much as
‘ I do; for we were admitted Members of *Parnas-*
‘ *sus* at the same Time, and both of us installed
‘ upon the same Day in the Coffee-house of Wits.
‘ That is true, *replied the other Author*, but fore-
‘ seeing that the same Misfortune might happen
‘ to me, as has happened to you, I presented the
‘ Coffee-woman some time ago with a Sonnet, in
‘ which I praised her extravagantly. She gave me
‘ six Months longer Credit, and I hope to be able
‘ to pay her in that Time, when I shall have
‘ finished my *Universal History* in eighteen Volumes
‘ in Folio. I was in hopes my Baker would have
‘ given me leave to dedicate it to him, on the pro-
‘ viso of supplying me with Bread for eight Years
‘ *gratis*; but he was deaf to my Proposal; for the
‘ Man is not so fond of Immortality as Money.
‘ Mean Time I am not at all sorry that I did not
‘ strike his Bargain with him, because I have ano-
‘ ther Person in View, who will undoubtedly be of
‘ more Service to me.

‘ I really

'I really fear, *replied the Abbé* Grifonet, *that* 'you reckon without your Hoſt: The Financiers 'are ſenſible how ridiculous it makes them to de-'dicate Books to them, and that when a Knave is 'praiſed, it is done on purpoſe to expoſe him the 'more to the Deriſion of the Public. The fine 'Sparks, and the Men of Quality are almoſt as 'much diſtreſſed in their pecuniary Affairs, as the 'Authors. The Gentlemen of the Long Robe 'fancy that they ought to pay nothing for Epiſtles 'Dedicatory, but Thanks; and the rich Men of 'Wit nothing but Praiſe: And if I may ſpeak my 'Mind, it muſt ſoon come to ſuch a paſs that Au-'thors will be glad to follow the Example of a 'Writer of our Time, who only dedicates his 'Books to the Shades and Manes of the Dead.

'I have a Subject, ſaid another Author, who is 'not in the ſame Caſe with any of thoſe you men-'tion, I mean the new King of *Corſica*, who I 'doubt not will be over-joyed at his new Acceſſion 'to the Crown, to receive Marks of the Joy 'which it gives to the chief Members of the Com-'monwealth of Learning. I will even make it 'plain to all *Europe* in the Epiſtle Dedicatory 'which I ſhall addreſs to him, that he has Law-'ful Rights to *Corſica*. As to that Matter, *re-'plied the Chevalier* de Maiſin *with a Smile*, you 'will give me leave to think that you will find 'it a hard Taſk to make out a Paradox ſo ex-'traordinary. Pardon me Sir, *replied the Au-'thor*, I will ſet about it thus; I will prove in the 'firſt Place, that in the firſt Government of the '*Corſicans*, Baſtards were capable of ſucceeding to 'the Crown. Afterwards I will cauſe one of the 'ancient Princes of *Corſica* to travel into *Germany*, 'where in the County of *la Mark* he ſhall be 'married clandeſtinely without any Formality and

without any other Witness but the God of Love, with a Daughter of the Family of *Nieuhoff*, and consequently upon this first Bastard capable of succeeding to the Crown of *Corsica*, I will establish the Rights of *Theodore* I.

'I submit, *said the Chevalier* de Maisin, and I own to you, M. *Poetaster*, that I could never have thought you would have hit upon such an Expedient. The only Question now is, whether the new King of *Corsica* will take it very well that you should derive his Pedigree from this Bastard? He would be in the wrong to take it amiss, *replied the Author*, but to prove to him that it is no Blot in his Escutcheon, I will take care to instance the Sultans to him, who are all merry-begotten Children, and not born in lawful Wedlock.

'I am, *said the Abbé* Grifonet, of M. *Poetaster*'s Opinion, and *Theodore* ought to be satisfied with a Vindication of his Accession to that Crown, let it be performed how it will. I would fain, provided it does not disoblige M. *Poetaster*, and that he thought it would not prejudice the Dedication of his *Universal History*, dedicate to the same Monarch the *Life of Prince* Eugene, which I shall finish in a Day or two. Have you wrote the *Life of Prince* Eugene, *said the Chevalier* de Maisin; Yes, Sir, *replied the Abbé*, I began it the very Day that his Death was published in the Gazette. The Bookseller for whom I work, gave it out every where that I was upon it, for fear my Project should be stole from me, and another get the Start of me. To be sure, *said the Chevalier* de Maisin, you have had several Memoirs communicated to you? I have the *Gazettes*, and *Historical Mercuries*, *replied the Abbé*. With these Helps only, Thanks to God,

'and

'and to the Desire of getting Money, I have wrote 'thirty-two Sheets in eleven Days and a half, and 'I am just at the End of my Work. But as quick 'as I write, I work very slowly in comparison 'with M. *Poetaster*, who in a Year and a half 'wrote his *Universal History*, for he finished a 'Volume in Folio every Month; and yet I am 'assured that whenever it comes out, it will be 'esteemed by all good Judges.

'You are too good to me, *replied the other Author*, I do not deserve these Praises. Indeed I 'might perhaps have performed something tolerable, if I had spent a little more Time upon it; 'but I taxed myself at three printed Sheets a Day, 'which good or bad, I was under a Necessity of 'finishing; for otherwise a Man cannot live. In 'plain Terms, such as is the Pay, such is the 'Work. As to promoting the Sale of the Book 'when it is printed, that is the Booksellers' Business. 'If any are left upon their Hands in their Shops, it 'is so much the worse for them. When I want 'Money, and the Work is in haste, I set all my 'People at Work; my Wife dictates, my Children 'write, and I revise the whole; and when that is 'done, leave it to take its Fate.

'You are a happy Man, *said the Abbé* Grisonet, 'to have such Assistance at hand; but I who have 'neither Wife nor Children, am obliged to do all 'myself; but however, when a Thing is out of my 'Hand, I do not take the Trouble of revising it.

'I do not blame you, *said the Chevalier* de Maisin's *Friend*, since the Booksellers are inclined to 'screw you to such Terms, you are in the right 'to deal with them as you do. And notwithstanding my Ambition for Fame, I fancy that 'I should hurry my Work as you do, If I were 'pressed with Hunger; and I own to you that I am

'obliged for half my Genius to the Tranquility of 'my Stomach, which I can satisfy before I take 'Pen in Hand.'

I know not dear *Isaac*, how thou relisheſt the Converſation of theſe Authors, but I thought it ſo ridiculous that I could not help imparting it to thee.

Fare thee well; and let me have the Pleaſure of hearing from thee oftener.

LETTER LXI.

From AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris, *to* ISAAC ONIS, *a Caraite, lately a Rabbi, at* Conſtantinople.

AS I went from the Author's Houſe that I mentioned in my laſt, the Chevalier *de Maiſin* deſired me to go with him to a Bookſeller in St. *James's-ſtreet*, where he wanted to buy ſome Books. When he arrived at his Shop he found him very angry, and ſcolding at his Wife, Child, Prentices, &c. *What is the matter, Sir*, ſaid he to him, *you ſeem to be very much out of Temper?* 'What is the 'matter, Sir, *anſwered the Bookſeller*, I wiſh that 'all Authors and Correctors too were at the Devil, 'and that the whole Race of them had been extinct 'for above a hundred Years paſt. But pray tell me, '*ſaid the Chevalier* de Maiſin, what is it makes you 'ſo uneaſy? Perhaps I might be of ſome ſervice 'to you. I will tell you, *ſaid the Bookſeller*, and 'leave you to judge whether ſuch an Accident 'could have happened to me if I had not been born 'under a very unlucky Planet.

'You

'You know the History of *Thuanus*, or M. *de Thou*, it is really a very good Book; I had undertaken to reprint a Translation of it, corrected and inriched with Notes. But surely the Devil was in the Wind, for all my Projects are vanished in Smoak, and my Money is evaporated to Nothing. I had contracted with an Author for this Work at nine hundred Livers, and thought I had made an excellent Bargain. I pray hear now what happened; the Author who undertook to revise this Historian, did not understand *Latin*, and talked very bad *French*. In order to supply those Defects, he took a *German* into Partnership with him, who indeed understood a little *Latin*, but his *French* was a very bad Jargon. These two cursed Authors set about the Work, and in the mean Time I advanced my Money to them at six, and four Pistoles at a Time: At last, after having given them near three hundred Livres, I wanted to see how it was performed before I paid any more. Therefore I caused some of the Tomes which were put into my Hands as perfect and correct, to be revised: They who examined them found them detestable: The old Translation was marred instead of mended; and the new one was neither *French*, *Dutch*, *Italian*, nor *Spanish*: In short, there was no guessing what Language those two damned Blotters of Paper wrote in; yet it was visible that their Idiom was rather *Gascon*, or that of *Provence*, than any other. In a Rage I rescued my Work from such bad Hands; but I cannot be easy for the Loss of my Money, and am resolved to fall out hereafter with all Authors, right or wrong *.

'Your

* A *Dutch* Bookseller having a Mind to reprint the *French* Translation of M. *de Thou*, which was publi-

'Your Anger, *said the Chevalier* de Maisin, 'will be over; and I am sure that you would not 'care to be embroiled with the Journalists, though 'it were even with those of *Trevoux*, whose Works 'are not to be met with now, but in the Shops of 'Grocers and Chandlers. You are too much 'afraid of having the Books which you print criti-'cized. True it is, *said the Bookseller*, that I am 'forced to keep fair with those Journalists, but I 'do not love them a whit the better for it. If they 'commend my Books, I know the Cost of it full 'well; and there is not a single Extract for which 'I do not give a Pistole. You have, *replied the* 'Chevalier de Maisin, the Pleasure of having a very 'pitiful Performance often recommended as an 'excellent Book. There is a great many Ninnies 'who seriously believe the Journalists to be Ora-'cles and upon their bare Approbation pay dear for 'the worst Books. It is certain that you poison the

at *Paris* some Time ago, applied to a Rascal, †, one *Damat* of *Provence*, who had been forced to fly to *Holland* because a Warrant was issued to apprehend him for some vile Pranks he had committed under an Attorney to whom he was Clerk. This Man, who understood *Latin* no more than the Water-carriers at *Paris* understand *Hebrew*, had the Assurance to undertake to revise it; and having taken a *German* Partner, who hardly understood a Word of *French*, the first Things that happened to fall under his Pen were spoiled. In what Hands are not the Works of the greatest Men sometimes trusted? This Revisal is actually at this Time in the Hands of two other Botchers, as incapable as the former to do any Manner of good with it. With such Zeal and Gratitude do certain Booksellers serve the Public, that has inriched them.

† See *les Caprices de l'Amour de la Fortune; or Aventures de Rosalina*, p. 237.

'Public

'Public with the insipid Productions of three or 'four bad Authors; but in the Republic of Letters 'this Crime is not punished. Bad Authors are 'permitted to write Books, Fools to read them, and 'Booksellers to put them off for as much as they 'can. Why how should we live else, *said the 'Bookseller?* What would become of that Swarm 'of Authors and Correctors that subsist only by 'the silly Stuff with which they stain Paper? In 'all Callings there are Quacks; bad Authors are 'Quacks in the Commonwealth of Learning, though 'their Drugs often sell better than the Compo-'sitions of greater Men. But now you talk of the 'Journals, *continued the Bookseller*, I forgot that I 'have a Letter here which I must send to a Jour-'nalist. Pray permit me to read it, *said the Che-'valier*, I promise you to be secret, and will engage 'the same for my Friend. The Bookseller did not 'want to be importuned, but opened the Letter, 'and gave it to the Chevalier *de Maisin*, who was 'so diverted with it, that he copied it on the Spot. 'The Bookseller indeed at first opposed it, but at 'last he complied upon the Chevalier's repeating 'his Assurance, that he would never divulge it as 'long as he lived.

A LETTER *from* S——* *the Bookseller, to his Journalist.*

'*SIR*,

'MY Apprentice will give you ten Pistoles to 'discharge the Debt to the Journal for the 'present three Months; but I tell you very freely 'that I am not hugely satisfied with your way of

*——*Quid rides? mutato nomine de te Fabula narratur.* Hor. Sat.

'Writing

‘ Writing, and if it holds, I must provide myself
‘ elsewhere. You praise my Books too faintly, and
‘ are not severe enough upon those of my Brethren.
‘ Endeavour in your Criticisms and your Invectives
‘ to imitate the *Journalists de Trevoux*; mind how
‘ they tear to Pieces, right or wrong, all Works
‘ that come from the Pen either of a Jansenist or a
‘ Protestant. Those are Models for your Imita-
‘ tion: But it seems as if you piqued yourself on
‘ some Remains of Modesty, and that you are afraid
‘ to declare openly that an excellent Book is good
‘ for nothing. Deal ingenuously with me always.
‘ Have not those same *Journalists de Trevoux*, that I
‘ mentioned to you as one of the Examples which
‘ you ought to follow, have not they ventured two
‘ or three Times to condemn certain Works of
‘ *Bayle* and *Boileau*, for no other Reason but because
‘ they did not love the Authors? As for you, let
‘ Avarice supply the Place of Hatred. Consider of
‘ it, Sir, if you are afraid to tell a Lye, that is to
‘ yourself; but for my Part I do not pay you for
‘ telling the Truth, but to commend the Books
‘ which I print, the Bad as well as the Good, and
‘ to find fault with all that may hinder the Sale of
‘ them. It seems you are for imitating the Probity
‘ and Sincerity of *Bayle* and *Sallo*. It is at your
‘ own Option, Sir, to do as they do; but you will
‘ be so good as to look out for another Bookseller,
‘ as I shall for another Journalist. However, Sir,
‘ if you are willing that we should continue to
‘ have any Dealings together, try to arm yourself
‘ with a little more Brass, and, in the present Jour-
‘ nal which you are now at work upon, be so good
‘ as to lash the Performances of the Marquis
‘ *d'Ar*——, not only those he has already publish-
‘ ed, but those that he shall publish hereafter, though

‘ you

'you know nothing either of the Titles or the 'Subjects. Take and tear to Pieces all the Tracts 'that are printed for the Bookſellers *N*— and *P*—; 'they are Janſeniſts, Enemies to God and the Go'vernment, and what is worſe than all, Mine. 'Get an exact Account of the Books written by 'the Moliniſts of any Eminence; cry them up to 'the third Heaven, and eſpecially thoſe that you 'find written by the Jeſuits, though it be even by 'their Lay-brothers. Criticiſe the new Tragedy 'of *Voltaire* with Severity, and do not fail to re'proach him bitterly for his having no Religion, 'though perhaps you have leſs yourſelf. You need 'be in no Pain about that, it being only a Re'proach which it is neceſſary to caſt upon that 'Author to ſtir up the Wrath of all Bigots againſt 'him, and indeed of all People that do not know 'him. The Reverend Father, the Rector, told me 'Yeſterday that he cannot be puniſhed too much 'for having propagated the Venom of Janſeniſm in 'his *Henriade* and his *OEdipus*.'

I am,

Sir, &c.

Without Doubt, dear *Iſaac*, thou wilt be diverted with this Letter, and think as the Chevalier *de Maiſin* and I do, that it is an Original of it's Kind. We bantered the Bookſeller heartily on the Praiſe that he was for beſtowing upon ſorry Books. 'If, *ſaid he*, none but good Books were printed, 'half the Bookſellers in the World muſt ſtarve, 'and the other Half would have much a-do to 'live. There are few People that can diſcern a 'good Book from a bad one: If it be but a new 'one, we find a Way to put it off; we take Care

'to get a pompous Character of it displayed in the 'Journals, and the Public who are always the 'Admirers and Dupes of Novelty, buy the Good 'and Bad indifferently.'

Thou wilt not be so much surprized, dear *Isaac*, at what the Bookseller said, if thou dost but consider that there are few People who are able to distinguish solid Beauties from Tinsel and false Brilliants. A Book which is perfectly Methodical, and in which the Beauty of the Sentiments is answerable to the Regularity of the Subjects does not strike the Imagination of some People so much as another, that has here and there certain sprightly, shining Sallies of Wit, though they are not continued, but like to those Meteors which blaze on a sudden as if they would set the whole World on Fire, and in a Moment are extinct. The Women especially are very fond of Books which captivate their Attention on Account of some extraordinary Adventure. The Sublimity and Grandeur of Subjects, and the Beauty of Diction does not amuse them so much as what is Marvellous and Extraordinary. And it is plain that they had much rather read Romances than Books of History, though such as are for adding *Utile Dulci*, seldom find that Mixture in Romances. I could wish that in the Title Page of such Books there was the Motto which is prefixed to the ancient *Amadis*, LIS & OUBLIE, *i. e.* Read and Forget; for though the Reading of Works of this Sort is amusing, yet the Remembrance of them is pernicious; for it leaves a Tenderness on the Heart which softens it, and gives the Mind a certain Taste for Adventures which are dangerous to young People, and apt to lead them very much astray.

I would not be mistaken as if I was intirely against the Reading of Romances; my Zeal does not

not carry me so far as that comes to; but I would have them read only as an Amusement, and not as a serious Affair; and that they should be considered as pleasant Dreams, invented to give some little Amusement to Men of Business, and to unbend the Minds of those who apply themselves to serious Studies. Then the Romance would become an innocent Pleasure, and People would no longer spend Months together in reading a Medley of Inchantments, Amours, Duels, Combats, Assignations, Treachery, Coquettry, and Knavery. The Profitable would be joined with the Delightful, and the reading of Books of History, Morality, and rational Philosophy would be the Basis for Men to build on, that are desirous of Knowledge. It is true, that this Refinement of the Taste would be a mortal Blow to the Generality of Authors; and many Writers who pick up a Livelihood from some ill-digested Scraps of History, which they commit to the Press, would perhaps be reduced to turn Shoe-makers. But if it were so where would be the Harm? There would be only the fewer bad Authors, and Shoes would be the cheaper. The Government and the Republic of Letters would both be the better for this new Regulation. The latter woulk get rid of bad Subjects, that are a Disgrace to it, and the Kingdom would find an Increase of it's Artificers; and perhaps the Authors too would be over-joyed that they had changed their Condition: For how many Shoe-makers are there that live better than Writers? And how many of the latter, that were not for the Goodness of those Shoe-makers to give them Credit, would go barefoot? Let their Thirst for Fame be what it will, they would soon be sensible that a Mechanic, who has no-body to molest him, and is sure of three Meals a-Day, is a hundred Times happier than an Author who depends for

for his Subsistance upon an Epistle Dedicatory, or a Sonnet.

But from what I say to thee, dear *Isaac*, thou must not imagine that all Authors in *France* are so unfortunate, and that there are no Persons who subsist by their Merit and Learning. As soon as a Writer has distinguished himself by any Talent, he is fortified against the Frowns of Fortune. It is true that he never becomes rich, but in short he is so well paid for his Works, that he can afford to live handsomely. The Misery that I have been speaking of, is confined only to bad Authors, who commence such purely for Bread, and who miscarrying in their Aim, generally starve. They make a Shift to live for a little while upon some Money which they get from the Booksellers; but sooner or later this Supply fails; and then it would be happy for them, as I have already said, that they could be Shoe-makers, or even Coblers; for in such a Calling they would not be liable to the Misery in which they now pine.

Fare thee well, dear *Isaac*, and may the God of our Fathers give thee Wealth and Prosperity in Abundance.

LETTER LXII.

From AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris, *to* ISAAC ONIS, *a Caraite, lately a Rabbi, at* Constantinople.

THOUGH I take such Care, dear *Isaac*, to be acquainted with the Manners and Customs of the *French*, yet I apply several Hours of the Day to Study.

Study. I am assiduous to complete, or at least to augment, the little Knowledge that I have acquired, and I endeavour to avoid every Thing that may obscure and render it less clear and difficult. I am careful to observe a Rule, and to follow a Method which may make the Knowledge of the Truth easy for me. I am of Opinion, that the extravagant Respect which Men pay to the Ancients, produces two pernicious Effects; it accustoms them to make no Use of their own Talents, and by little and little incapacitates them to make Use of their Reason. They who spend their whole Lives in reading of *Aristotle* and *Plato*, do not take so much Pains to reconcile the Opinions of those Philosophers with Truth, and to reject those which have the contrary Appearance, as to know them all in general, and blindly to defend and embrace them, without requiring any other Proofs of them than their being in the Works of those Ancients.

Another dangerous Consequence, that sometimes attends the Reading of the Ancients, is the wild Confusion into which it throws the Ideas of such as apply themselves to it, without knowing how they ought to behave in a Study of this Kind. It is very profitable to read the Ancients, when a Person ruminates on what he reads, when he reflects on the Sentiments that are discernable in their Works, and when the *Greek* and *Roman* Authors, great Men as they were, are considered nevertheless as meer human Beings, and by consequence liable to commit Faults: Then a Person may be capable of improving very much; but when a Man is over and above fond of a Writer, only because he is one of the Ancients, and makes it his chief Aim to know every Thing that he believed, without troubling himself with what is really necessary to be believed, that is acting as indiscreetly as a Man who should prefer

an

an old Brass Medal, defaced and spoiled, to a Piece of modern Gold, finely engraved, and the more valuable by Reason of it's Weight. Is there any Thing so precious as the Truth? And can all the Credit which an Author may have acquired in two thousand Years, turn the Balance against Reason and Evidence?

It is the common Folly of all Commentators, to deify the Defects and Errors of the Ancients: They fancy that the Praise they give to the Authors to whom they comment, recoils in Part upon themselves; and an Annotator is apt to look upon his Author and himself but as one and the same Person. *Upon this Supposition, Self-love plays it's Part admirably, and shares in the Incense which it sets a smoaking to the Glory of another* *. The most singular Thing of all is, that the Commentators do not only commend their Authors because they esteem them, but also because it is the Custom and Fashion established by long Usage. A Commentator would pass among his Brethren as a Novice in the Subjects he treats of, if he did not praise the Book and the Merit of it's Author far beyond the Truth.

There are three Sorts of Works that are calculated to lay Snares for our Reason and Understanding, by prepossessing them with false Ideas, *viz. Commentaries*, *Journals*, and *Prefaces*.

As it would be ridiculous for a Person to say, that he is employed on an insignificant and trifling Subject, the Commentators always give Notice that they are illustrating or explaining a Divine Author of the First Rank, with a capacious, profound, and penetrating Genius, who was the Admiration

* *Malebranche*'s Search after Truth, part ii. cap. iv. p. 200.

of

of the Age in which he lived, and of all Ages since. The Jest of it is to find the same Commentator who is employed upon two Authors, whose Sentiments are directly opposite, contradicting himself in every Article, and extolling an Opinion to the Skies, which he had damned to the lowest Pit of Hell.

The Journalists blame or commend a Work, just as the Bookseller, who is at the Expence of Printing the Journal, is interested in the Approbation or Censure of it.

An Author endeavours in a Preface to impose on his Reader, and dazzle his Eyes, insomuch that there is hardly one to be met with, which is conformable to Truth and good Sense.

Therefore, dear *Isaac*, it is my Opinion, that in order for a Man to pass a solid Judgment on the Merits of a Book, whether ancient or modern, it is absolutely necessary he should read it without Prejudice or Prepossession; that he should first reconcile his Opinions with Reason, and then with the Works of Great Men; that he should examine those Passages which may appear obscure or doubtful to us, reject those which we plainly see to be false, and adopt those with Pleasure which inform us and shew us the Truth, or which serve to corroborate the Knowledge of what we were acquainted with before. That is the only Way of judging solidly of the Goodness of a Work, and all other Proofs are either false or uncertain.

The Generality of Mankind judge of the Goodness of a Book only from the Reputation of the Author; which, it is true, is a strong Prepossession in it's Favour, but yet it is not a Mark that is infallible. *Scot*, and many other Scholastic Authors, had a surprizing Reputation in their Time, but are since fallen into such Contempt, that they are hardly so much

as

as known by some Monks. General Praise no further ascertains the Goodness of a Work, than as such Commendation of it is just and equitable, and as it is founded on the mature Reflexion of the Persons that pronounce it.

Nor is the Sale of a Book any better Proof of it's Goodness. As the Number of People that read trifling and puerile Performances, is far greater than those who apply themselves seriously to Study, the *Bigarrures de des Accords*, or, the Discords of Concords, have been printed much oftener than the Works of *Des Cartes* and *Gassendi*; and the *Poetry* of Father *de Corceau*, than the Poem of St. *Prosper* by M. *de Saci*.

A Book ought not to be reckoned a whit the better for it's being scarce. The Writings of *Vanini* are very scarce, and so are many other Books written by Libertines; whereas the Works of *Cicero*, *Quintilian*, and *Plato*, are very common. Shall it therefore be said, that these are indifferent Authors, and but little Request? On the contrary, most good Books are very common, and the bad ones scarce to be met with. *The Reason of it is plain*, says a modern Author, *good Books are often printed, and the bad ones but once or twice at most, and that is all.*

The *French* were prepossessed, dear *Isaac*, to such a Degree towards the Close of the last Century, and the Beginning of this, that if an Author was but ancient, he needed nothing more to have a Number of Advocates, who cried up his Faults for Perfections. On the other Hand, several Persons were so far prejudiced in favour of the modern Writers, that they approved of nothing, and thought nothing of the Ancients good. A Man cannot give into such extravagant Notions, without being a Fool, a Madman, and excessively ignorant. There is a

just

just medium in Things. The Ancients had their Faults, but then they had great Beauties; and there are some of them whom the Moderns could never come up to. This is the Method which I think the propereſt for ſettling the Diſpute about this Difference.

Ariſtotle, *Plato*, *Epicurus*, and the other ancient Philoſophers were very bad Naturaliſts, compared to *Gaſſendi*, *Des Cartes*, *Newton*, &c. and ſorry Metaphyſicians compared to *Locke* and *Mallebranche*. Their Notions, as to moral Philoſophy, were as perfect as ours; of the Truth of which Fact, *Tully*'s Offices are an invincible Proof. They were meer Ignoramus's, or but little better, as to Aſtronomy, Navigation, and Geography; but in Point of Hiſtory they have outdone us. Father *Paul*, M. *de Thou*, *Rapin Thoyras*, are even far ſhort of that Perfection which we find in the Fragments that are left us of *Saluſt* and *Tacitus*; and they are far inferior to *Titus Livy*, *Thucidides*, and *Xenophon*, be the Performance of the latter ever ſo inconſiderable.

The Beauties of *Taſſo*, *Milton*, *Voltaire*, are not equal to thoſe of *Homer* and *Virgil*; not but the Poems of the Ancients have their Faults as well as the Modern, but they have ſo much of the Good, the Sublime, the Marvellous, that certain Faults are hardly viſible, or at leaſt are eaſily pardoned *. *Guarini*'s *Paſtor Fido*, *Fontenelle's Eclogues*, and ſome

* It muſt be allowed, that there are great Defects in *Homer*'s Poems. But a Man muſt be either very ignorant or prejudiced, not to perceive their charming Beauties. Such is the *Iliad*, of which I ſhould rather chooſe to have been the Author, than of all *La Motte*'s Works, and I will venture to ſay, than (excepting *Fontenelle*'s) of all the Compoſitions of the Members of the *French* Academy; I mean the *French* Academy in it's preſent State, in 1727.

ſome of thoſe of *Segrais* are perhaps preferable to the Works of *Theocritus*; but in *Virgil*'s Works there are Eclogues which outweigh them, and perhaps totally eclipſe them.

The Tragedies of *Sophocles* and *Euripides* are very beautiful; but a Man who is not an Idolizer of Antiquity, does not perceive ſo much of the Brilliant, nor ſo many Charms, and ſo much of the Soft and Sublime at the ſame Inſtant, as in thoſe of *Corneille* and *Racine*. There are even ſome *French* Poets that come a vaſt way behind thoſe two illuſtrious Moderns, but nevertheleſs may compare with the ancient *Greek* Tragedians: The *Ariana* of *Thomas Corneille*, the *Rhadamiſtus* of *Crebillon*, the three laſt Acts of *Voltaire*'s *Oedipus*, and his *Brutus*, are equal perhaps to the *Electra* of *Euripides*, and the *Oedipus* of *Sophocles*. As to the *Italians*, their theatrical Performances are deteſtable. It ſeems that *Italy* was never capable of producing any Genius, who could treat a Tragic Subject as it ſhould be. *Seneca*'s Pieces which remain to us at this Day, do not come up to thoſe of *Pradon*; and we ſhould have been very much obliged to our Anceſtors, if they had left us ſome better Compoſition in the Room of it.

As for Comedy, that of the Ancients and the Moderns is pretty equal. *Ariſtophanes*, *Menander*, *Plautus*, *Terence*, may be matched with Don *Lopez de la Vega*, *Moliere*, and ſome good *Engliſh* Authors of that Kind. Yet I think if the Point was examined critically and impartially, after mature Reflexion, one might be determined perhaps to give the Moderns the Preference.

Several Authors have compoſed very fine Elegies, and ſome Pieces of Gallantry in theſe latter Times. The Counteſs of *Suza* has ſucceeded perhaps better than all of them; but her Works do not

come

come near those of *Ovid*, *Tibullus*, and *Propertius*. The Ode was carried by the *Greeks* and *Romans* to such a Pitch of Perfection as it never has arrived to since. There is no Comparison between *Pindar*, *Horace*, and *Anacreon*, and *Malherbe*, *Rousseau*, and *la Motte*; not but the latter have many Beauties. *Rousseau* especially set out in such a Manner, that the Advocates for the Moderns entertained Hopes that he would one Day or other equal *Horace*. But it seems that the same Arret which blasted his Reputation, extinguished his Genius; for after he was banished from *France*, he did not write a Piece that was worthy of the Vivacity and Penetration of the *Brabanders*. And his Muse, though applauded at *Brussels*, is actually hissed every where else in *Europe*, by every Man that has the least Notion of *French* Poetry.

As to Eloquence, we are very much inferior to the Ancients. *Bossuet*, *Flechier*, *Patrou*, *la Maitre*, *Bourdaloue*, had neither the Force, nor Fire, nor the Sublime of *Demosthenes*; nor have they come up to the Majesty, Grandeur and Dignity of *Cicero*. Modern *Italy* has produced no Orator of Distinction; and all it's Preachers are rather Scaramouches, Buffoons, and Harlequins, who divert their Hearers by Puns and Conundrums, than Men that pretend to reach the Heart, and to captivate the Minds of their Hearers by their Eloquence.

This is what I think, dear *Isaac*, may be said with the least Partiality as to the Dispute between the Ancients and the Moderns. That is the Opinion of all the learned Men who make Use of their Reason, and do not abandon themselves intirely to the Prejudices which they may have imbibed in their Infancy. The Regents in the Colleges generally inspire their Scholars with the utmost Contempt for

all Authors, whose Works are not fifteen hundred Years old. That was the Time, *say they*, when Men had the Freedom of Thinking; but since that, they have been forbid to make Use of their Understanding. Young People accustom themselves by little and little to think after this Manner, and do not care to have their Opinion contradicted, or so much as examined. They never look into Books that they hear run down; and when they are come to a certain Age, their Prejudices are so strong that they look into modern Authors in Hopes of finding Arguments to diminish the Beauties that strike them. How many People that are charmed with the Poetry, and noble bold Sentiments of *Voltaire*, yet condemn his *Henriade* without a Desire to distinguish the Beauties from the Defects; and this only because they fancy that a Modern cannot write a good Epic Poem? But I would fain ask them, whether they believe that in ancient Days Men had two Heads, two Souls, two Understandings, four Hands, and four Feet? If so, to be sure none of the Moderns can ever vie with the Ancients. But if like us, they had but one Soul, and one Understanding, I doubt not but there may still be found a Genius as good as that of *Virgil*, except he that formed it revealed to them that hereafter he would produce no more Men who should attain to that Perfection.

Fare thee well, dear *Isaac*; live content and happy, and may Heaven grant thee Health and Wealth. Pray write to me as soon as thou canst.

LETTER

LETTER LXIII.

From JACOB BRITO, *at* Naples, *to* AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris.

IT is now six Days, dear *Monceca*, since I arrived at *Naples*. But before I acquaint thee with what Observations I have already made in this City, I will give thee some Particulars of what I saw going to *Loretto*. The *Nazarenes* pretend that the Temple of that City was carried thither by Angels. It was a House in a Village of *Nazareth* in *Judæa*, which, as they say, was first brought to *Dalmatia*, and pitched upon the Mountain of *Tersolto*, where for some Time it rested. From thence the same Angels carried it farther, and set it down in a Forest near the Marquisate of *Ancona*. At length, after two or three Turns more, it was carried for good and all to the Place where it now stands: And the *Nazarenes* to fix it there intirely, and to prevent it from rambling any more about for the future, have built a magnificent Temple with which it is inclosed.

The Priests who serve in this Temple pretend that the House is built of Stones that are quite unknown: But I must tell thee, that after having examined the Thing, I plainly perceived that it was built of Bricks, and certain grey reddish Stones, which are Nothing more than what are very common. These Stones and Bricks are so ill joined together, that it is plain the Mason's Work was done in very great Haste. People came to *Loretto* from all the Countries in the World; for all the *Nazarene* Papists, have as great a Veneration for this

Place, as we have for *Jerusalem*; and some Years ago, during the Easter-Holidays there were at *Loretto* near two hundred thousand Pilgrims, Men and Women; but Pleasure and Joy have as great a Share as Devotion in the Travels of the greatest Part of both Sexes to it. They make Parties for *Loretto* all over *Italy*, just like Parties for a Ball. The Monks and Nuns repair thither in Crouds, dressed in odd fantastical Habits. When the Way is a little too long, the People ride thither on the Backs of Asses, which are reputed to have a Smack of Sanctity, like the Camel that brought the Alcoran to *Mecca*. They have the Talent and Virtue never to stumble, and are very tractable like their Brother Species; but they have far more Penetration, so that the Rider may let them go where they will, without fear of their rambling out of the Road.

The chief Ceremony of the Pilgrims when they come, is a Procession round the Temple upon their Knees, which is the pleasantest Sight in the World. Imagine, dear *Aaron*, thou wast to see two or three hundred School-boys hopping upon one Leg one after another, and when one tumbles, he that is next behind falls over him. Just so it happens to the Pilgrims of *Loretto*, who vie which shall creep nearest to the Wall of the Temple; so that some going one Way, and others meeting them, it happens very often that they jostle one another, and before the Devotion is over, they fall to kick and cuff.

If thou shouldst ask me, dear *Moncca*, when and how I think this Structure was built, it will not be an easy Task for me to give thee a very clear Account. All that I can assure thee with any Certainty is, that this pretended Miracle happening in the Pontificate of one *Boniface*, a cunning, sharp, complaisant

complaisant Man, capable of putting the greatest Designs in Execution, and withal excessively covetous, it is probable that in one Night several Workmen built that Fabric, which they say was brought from *Nazareth*, and which at most is but one Room, very small and low. This too is the more probable, because at that Time there was no Habitation for above a League from the Place where the Temple of *Loretto* actually stands. At the Time when the Story of the sudden Arrival of this House was given out, the *Nazarenes* were plunged in such gross Ignorance, and so besotted with Superstition, that they were ready blindly to believe any Thing, ever so contrary to Sense and Reason. But I really Question, whether such a Miracle would make it's Fortune now, or at least, whether it would meet with any Defenders except in *Italy*.

So much, dear *Moncca*, for *Loretto*. I come now to speak of *Naples*, where I have already seen a great many fine Places since I came. This City has been so often ravaged, that most of it's Antiquities have been destroyed or damaged; however the Ruins of an Amphitheatre are still to be seen, and two or three Fronts of old Temples which are appropriated to the Embellishment of new ones that have been built upon the Foundations and Ruins of the others.

Naples is one of the biggest and finest Cities in *Europe*, and even seems to have the Advantage of *Rome*, *London*, *Paris*, and *Venice*. It is in the general regular and beautiful; those other Cities have indeed many grand Houses, but then they are interspersed with low ones, or such as are ill built, and disagreeable to the View.

The *Neapolitans* are reckoned the worst and wickedest People in *Europe*. There was a Time when

a Couple of Crowns was a Market-price for a Man's Life; and there were above three thousand Banditti in the Kingdom that had the Assurance to make a Stand against regular Troops, which were at infinite Trouble to extirpate the Race of them. But at length the *Spaniards*, and after them the *Germans* have almost intirely purged the State of all those Miscreants; for they put a great Number of them to Death, and struck the others with such a Terror, that they have been forced to lay themselves under a Restraint, and to change their Way of Life.

The *Neapolitans* formerly loved the *Spaniards* very much, but abhorred the *French*, and hated the *Germans*. Their Way of thinking seems now to be partly changed: Of this they have given several Proofs since the last War; and at present I think it may be said, that they still abhor the *French*, and hate the *Spaniards*, but love the *Germans*. This is the Taste of all *Italy*; though I cannot imagine what it is makes the People such Friends to the *Germans*. As for a *German* Officer indeed I am not at a Loss to think why he is better beloved by an *Italian* than a *French* Officer: For the *German* drinks his Landlord's Wine, and takes Possession of the best Apartment in the House without much Ceremony; whereas the *Frenchman* on the contrary makes a thousand Cringes, lies in the Barn rather than fail; spends the little Money he has in Feasts and Presents, but caresses the Women; which last is a capital Crime among the *Italians*. But they hate the *Spaniards* from a different Cause; though since their Humours sympathize pretty much, being Bigots and Slaves alike to the Monks, and zealous Servants to the Holy Office, it is surprizing that they should be more in Love with the Severity of the

the *Germans*, which keeps them under very great Restraint.

As there are few People in *Italy* so wicked as the *Neapolitans*, so there are few that are so ignorant and stupid. They seem to make no other Use of their Reason, than to give a Relish to their Vice; for unless some wicked Action is in Hand, a *Neapolitan* has little more Sense than a Beast! This gross Ignorance prevails even among the People of Distinction, and it is really surprizing to see how shallow they are! They can tell how many Temples there are in *Naples*; which are the Saints Days; what Streets the Processions go through; what Coffee-houses People meet at; and that is all they know. The other Day as I was in one of those Coffee-houses, I heard a *Neapolitan* Nobleman ask a Question of a *Frenchman*, which will enable thee to judge of the Understanding of his Peers: He asked very seriously if the Harbour of *Paris* was as handsome as that of *Naples*, and if the King's Ships rode in it? I am willing to think that all the other Noblemen are not quite such Fools; but in general there is no Ignorance like to that of a *Neapolitan* Nobleman.

Most of the Grandees of the Country reside commonly at *Rome*; they pass some Time every Year at *Naples*, and after that Season is over, they go back again. They are in the Right to think *Rome* a much more agreeable Place to reside in; for there is no Comparison betwixt the two Cities.

The Temples at *Naples* are magnificent beyond all Expression; they are adorned from Top to Bottom with Marble, Porphyry, Gold, Silver, Brass, and magnificent Painting; and those of *Rome*, unless we except St. *Peter*'s, are not better than those of this City. One of the chief was built, as the

Nazarenes say, upon Account of a great Miracle; for at *Naples*, as in the Rest of *Italy*, scarce any Thing is done, in which the Saints are not remarkably concerned. They say therefore that the Devil, in the Shape of a Hog, walked every Day regularly in the Place where the Temple is built; and that he frightened the Inhabitants to such a Degree, that they ran away, and the City was by Degrees quite deserted. This Devil of a Hog made a terrible grunting. He spent his Time better than in turning up the Ground with his Snout; for when he caught any Person, especially such as had not taken Care to give Charity to the poor Mendicant Fryars, he maltreated them, and reduced them to a Condition which endangered their Lives. One *Pomponius*, who was at that Time Pontiff of *Naples*, consulted a Female Saint for whom he had a very great Devotion, and she ordered him to build a Temple for her in the very Place where the Hog used to take his Recreation. As soon as the first Foundation-Stone of the Edifice was laid, the Devil disappeared for ever; and the Pontiff caused a Brazen Hog to be made, which is kept in the Vestry of this Temple, to preserve the Remembrance of so illustrious a Miracle.

There are several Things in this City that are every whit as surprizing. In a certain Convent of Monks there is a Picture, by which the Painter pretended to represent the Deity, in Conversation with one *Thomas d'Aquinas*. But all these Prodigies are meer Trifles, compared to what happens here every Year in the principal Temple, which they call the *Cathedral*: The Blood of one *Januarius*, stopped up in a Bottle, boils as often as they bring it near the Shrine in which his Body lies. When this Miracle is slow in the Operation, and it is necessary to present the Bottle several Times to the Shrine,

Shrine, the People take it for a Threatning of the greatest Dangers. If *Januarius* should not happen to be in the Humour to let his Blood boil at all, there would perhaps be some strange Revolution in the City. It is true that the Viceroys of *Naples* order the Priests very seriously to see that the Miracle has it's Operation, and tell them they shall be answerable for the Success of it. Some Years ago the Bottle not bubbling as soon as it used to do, the People ran raving about the Streets like mad Folks; but at length the Miracle operated, and a Calm succeeded.

Is it possible, dear *Monceca*, that Men should be so ignorant and silly as to give into such Chimæras, and for others to be so knavish as to endeavour thus to abuse the Credulity of the Vulgar? What would the *Nazarenes* say of us, if we gave into such Errors? What Piles of Tracts would be written against us? How ridiculous would their Authors make us? How bitterly would they reproach us. 'Ye silly People (they would say to us) what a Part 'do you make the Divinity to perform? Has he 'need to manifest himself by such Mummery? 'Lift up your Eyes to Heaven. See how the Sun 'repeats with Gigantic Strides it's daily Race. 'These are Tokens worthy of the Grandeur of the 'Almighty. Have you forgot that he has forbid 'you by his Law to make yourself the Likeness of 'any Thing in Heaven above, or upon the Earth 'beneath, or in the Waters under the Earth. Dash 'your Vial therefore in Pieces, and the Image which 'you think has the Power of making this Blood to 'boil. Remember that the God of your Fathers 'even punished the Children for the Wickedness 'of their Parents.' Such would be the Language of the *Nazarenes* to us. But if they themselves do a Thing, it is always virtuous and laudable. Infalli-

bility is their Portion, and Error and Confusion ours.

Fare thee well, dear *Monceca*, and let me have the Delight to hear from thee.

LETTER LXIV.

From AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris, *to* ISAAC ONIS, *a Caraite, formerly a Rabbi, at* Constantinople.

A POET of whom I have often made mention to thee, has lately inriched the Theatre with a new Tragedy which is beautiful, moving, well conducted, well diversified, and full of noble and bold Sentiments. Before I communicate some Reflexions to thee which I have made upon the Subject of this Piece, and that thou mayest the better relish them, it is necessary for me to say one Word to thee concernicg the Author's Character.

Voltaire (which is his Name) is of a lively, penetrating, bold Genius; he is an excellent Versifier, a better Philosopher than Poets are generally, a Man of Honour, affable and without Ceremony in Society, but so prepossessed is he in Favour of a Man of Wit, that he esteems a truly learned Man far beyond an ancient Nobleman, who has no other Merit than his Title or Extraction. The little Regard he has shewn upon some Occasions to Persons of the first Rank, has brought dangerous Enemies upon his Back. He writes with such a bold Pen, and sometimes gives such a public Rebuke to Superstition, that the Monks, their Emissaries,

Emissaries, and those who do not love him, give it out all over *Europe*, that he has no Religion at all. Nevertheless in all his Works there is a Spirit of Candour and Humanity, which plainly shews that he is thoroughly convinced of the Existence of a God, who is Good, Just, and sovereignly Powerful; and even some of those Pieces, for which he is most bitterly reproached, and in which he constantly denies his having any Share, are full from the Beginning to the End of the Praises which all Men are obliged in Gratitude and Duty to ascribe to the Divinity.

That which is surprizing in this Country is, the Fury with which People attempt, though without Proofs, to charge certain Books and Writings upon Persons that disavow them. Thou wouldest be deceived if thou thoughtest that in *France* an Author was only responsible for his own Works; he is accountable for all that the Public and his Enemies are pleased to impute to him. The Vulgar has condemned twenty Writers for Pieces in which they never had the least Hand. But what will astonish thee more, is the Spite which certain mean Authors, the vile Excrements of *Parnassus*, bear to all those that are distinguished for their Merit and Learning. They surfeit the Town with an Inundation of Satyrs, find fault with the best Books without any Decorum, launch out into Invectives in Coffee-houses, and other public Places, and by meer Dint of Clamour they sometimes gain the Belief of the credulous Part of the Public; like to the Ravens, which by their Croaking silence the Song of the dear Nightingale, or drown it's Melody.

One of *Voltaire*'s bitterest Slanderers, is a Monster spewed up out of Hell for the Punishment of all Authors who have any Reputation, and value themselves upon their Honour, *Rousseau*, which

is the Name of this Brother of *Alecto*, with his Quiver of Calumny, wounded every Man that had any Merit with his Arrows; and though he was the Enemy of all Mankind, his Hatred raged with the more Violence against those that he thought the most deserving of Esteem. So many Crimes, in short, brought all *France* upon his Back: The Government thought itself bound in Interest to destroy a Villain and a Madman; he was condemned by an Arret of the Parliament at *Paris*, and if he had not fled for it, he would have suffered the just Punishment of his Crimes by the Hand of the Hangman. He wandered a long while from one Kingdom to another; and his Genius and Talent for Poetry made him welcome at first to those that did not know him. But like to the Viper in *Æsop*, he flew at his Benefactors as soon as they had rescued him from the miserable Plight to which he was reduced by his Rambles. At last, being weary of his Crimes, though not satisfied, he stayed some Time without rousing his poisonous Serpents; but then like an implacable Fury, from his Retreat he bespattered all good Authors, whom he hated the more by Reason of his Banishment. That, dear *Isaac*, was one of *Voltaire*'s principal Adversaries; and by him you may judge what the others were.

I come now to *Voltaire*'s Tragedy of *Alzira*, which is a Piece I take to be conducted with a great deal of Art and Learning. The Attention of the Audience is suspended and animated even to the last Scene; and the fifth Act furnishes such Distress, as is very moving. I will give thee an Idea of the Piece, and of the Characters of the chief Actors.

Alvarez, the Fathers of *Guzman*, Governor of *Peru*, opens the Scene with his Son, and tells him of

of the Grant which he has received from the Council at *Madrid* to resign his Employment to him. He intreats him to release some Prisoners that were apprehended the Day before, and acquaints him how he was saved in a Battle by one of them, an *American* Youth. Don *Guzman* is loth to follow his Father's Advice. The Characters of Don *Alvarez* and Don *Guzman* are unravelled perfectly well in this first Scene, and their Conversation makes the Audience absolute Masters of the Subject of the Piece. *Guzman*, when he grants Life to the Prisoners of his Father, who is as good-natured and as compassionate to the Unfortunate, as his Son is proud, haughty, and cruel, intreats him to try what he could to turn the Heart of *Alzira* (the Daughter of *Monteza*, Sovereign of a Part of *Potosi*) whom he is to marry. In the same Act we are informed by *Alzira* herself, that she had been promised to *Zamor*, an *American* Prince, and that she was just going to be joined to him in Matrimony, when the cruel *Guzman* came and separated her from a Lover whom she adored. In repeating the Account of her Misfortunes to her Father *Monteza*, while he was pleading with her in Favour of *Guzman*, she acquaints the Audience of them without Affectation, as well as of her changing her Religion. In the very first Scenes the Subject of the Piece is fully explained. *Zamor* who was thought to be dead, is one of those unknown Prisoners that had been set at Liberty. He meets *Alzira* again the very Moment that she comes from the Altar where she had sworn to be true for ever to *Guzman*, who comes that Instant and surprizes them both together. The great Spirit of this *American* did not suffer him to conceal his Name and Family. *Guzman*, who was vexed and jealous to the last Degree, resolves he shall

die

die; but afterwards his Father opposed his Resolution, and by a certain Accident, which has a charming Effect on the Minds of the Audience, this same *Zamor* is discovered to be that very *American* who had saved the Life of *Alvarez* in Battle. *Guzman*, notwithstanding his Father's Intreaty, orders *Zamor* to be committed to Prison: *Alzira* trembling for her Lover, bribes one of his Keepers; who undertakes to carry him safe out of the Town; but no sooner does *Zamor* find himself at Liberty, than he takes the Opportunity to sacrifice the cruel *Guzman* on the Spot, though attended by his Guards. He is thereupon seized and sentenced to die, as is likewise *Alzira*, who was thought to have had a Share in the Murder of her Spouse, though she was perfectly innocent. But just as these unhappy Victims to Love were expecting every Minute to be put to Death, *Guzman*, who was not yet dead of the Wound he received from *Zamor*, makes amends for all his Cruelties and Barbarities, by shewing a generous Clemency in the last Breath of his Life.

This, in few Words, dear *Isaac*, is the Subject of the Piece; and the following are the different Characters of the Actors.

Alvarez is a perfect honest Man, full of Candor and Humanity, zealous for his Religion, but without being blinded by that Rage to which they give the Name of Piety.

Guzman is proud, vain, haughty, stately, cruel; such a Man, in short, as the *Spaniards* are represented to be who conquered *Mexico*; and is so fully possessed with the pernicious Maxims of the Makers of Converts, that provided they are but made Christians, it is all alike to him which way it is done.

Monteza is a new Convert, convinced of the Religion which he has embraced; but his Daughter on the contrary wedded to her old Prejudices, owes

owes her Virtue to her own good Sense only, so that few of her Motives are founded on Religion.

Zamor is zealous for his Gods, a faithful Lover, formed by the pure Lessons of Nature, humane to all Men in general, irreconcileable to his Enemies, full of Valour, and fit for putting the boldest Designs in Execution.

These various Characters are kept up perfectly well, and accompanied with many glaring Incidents, which strongly engage Attention *Alvarez* at the same Time that he gives the first Idea of his own Character, thus informs the Audience of the Cruelties of the *Spaniards*,

Ah! Dieu nous envoïoit, par un contraire Choix,
Pour annoncer son Nom, pour faire aimer ses Loix:
Et nous, de ces Climats Destructeurs implacables;
Nous, & d'Or & de Sang toujours insatiables;
Deserteurs de ses Loix qu'il falloit enseigner,
Nous égorgeons ce Peuple, au lieu de le gagner.
Par Nous tout est in Sang, par Nous tout est en Poudre;
Et Nous n'avons du Ciel imité que la Foudre.
Notre Nom, je l'avoue, inspire la Terreur;
Les Espagnols sont craints; mais, ils sont en Horreur,
Fléaux du nouveau Monde, injustes, vains, avares,
Nous seuls en ce Climat nous sommes les Barbares.
L'Americain, farouche en sa simplicité,
Nous egale en Courage, & nous passe en Bonté.

Are we sent hither in our Maker's Cause,
To spread his Name, and recommend his Laws?
We! who destroy the Country without Mercy!
Shall we with Blood and Gold insatiate Rage?
Shall we desert his Laws we were to teach,
And cut the People's Throats to win their Hearts?
Our Priests are all for Blood, for Sword and Fire,
And only in it's Thunder act like Heaven!

Our

Our Name I own it, Terror doth inspire,
The *Spaniards* dreaded, but more abhorred.
Proud, covetous, unjust; we, we alone
Are the *Barbarians* here, of this World the Scourge.
The wild *American*, though rough, yet honest,
Surpasseth us in Goodness, and hath not less Courage.

I cannot be certain, dear *Isaac*, whether thou art sensible that all the different Characters of this Play are visible in these fourteen Lines. That of *Alvarez* is displayed by the Compassion which is conspicuous in his Words, where he gives a perfect Picture of the *Spaniards* and the *Americans*. It is plain that this is a Touch of a masterly Hand. The following is another, not a whit inferior to it: *Alzira* speaking to her Father, draws her own Picture.

Mes yeux n'ont jusqu'ici rien vû que par vos Yeux!
Mon Cœur, changé par vous, abandonna ses Dieux.
Je ne regrette point leurs Grandeurs terrassées,
Devant ce Dieu nouveau, comme nous, abaissées.
Mais vous, qui m'assuriés, dans mes Troubles cruels
Que la Paix habitoit aux Pieds de ses Autels;
Que sa Loi, sa Morale, & consolante, & pure,
De mes Sens desolez guériroit la Blessure;
Vous trompiés ma Foiblesse; Un Trait, toujours Vainqueur,
Dans le Sein de ce Dieu vient déchirer mon Cœur
Il y porte une Image à jamais renaissante:
Zamore vit encor un Cœur de son Amante.

Whate'er I see is with my Father's Eyes;
Whate'er I Love is for my Father's Sake:
I chang'd my very Gods and took my Father's.
Yet has this Father, piously severe,
Wrong'd my believing Weakness, and undone me.

He

He told me, to compose my troubled Heart,
Peace held her Dwelling at the Altar's Foot.
He told me, his Religion cur'd Despair,
It's Law, it's Moral comforting and pure,
And soften'd every Pang that pierc'd the Soul.
But ah! 'twas all Deceit! all dear Delusion!
Mix'd with the Image of an awful God,
A human Image struggles in my Heart,
And checks my willing Virtue in it's rising!
Zamor, tho' dead to Nature, lives to Love;
Zamor still triumphs in *Alzira*'s Breast.

That Trouble, and that Struggle of the Mind which *Alzira* so well expresses, perfectly denotes the Disposition of a Heart only changed by a paternal Respect, and which has not such a firm Belief in the new Deity which it serves, as to merit it's Favours and Rewards. How particular soever *Alzira*'s Character is, it is perfectly supported, and full of new Sentiments created by the Novelty of the Subject. Such is this Passage, where the Author makes *Alzira* draw a Parallel between the *Spanish* and *American* Ladies.

Par ce grand Changement dans ton Ame inhumaine,
Par un Effort si beau tu vas changer la mienne.
Tu l'assures ma Foi, mon Respect, mon Retour,
Tous mes Vœux, s'il en est qui tiennent lieu d'Amour.
Pardonne—Je m'egare—Eprouve mon Courage.
Peut être une Espagnole eut promis d'Advantage:
Elle eut pû prodiguer les Charmes de ses Pleurs.
Je n'ai point leurs Attraits, & je n'ai point leurs Mœurs.
Ce Cœur simple, & formé des Mains de la Nature,
En voulant s'adoucir, redouble ton Injure:
Mais, enfin, c'est à toi d'essayer desormais
Sur ce Cœur indompté la Force des Bienfaits.

By

By ſuch a Change in thy inhuman Breaſt,
By ſuch a pleaſing Force thou changeſt mine.
Your Right ſecures you my Reſpect, and Faith,
And all my Vows too, if they can charm like Love.
Forgive me, I ſhall be betrayed by Fear,
To promiſe till I overcharge my Power.
Yet try what Changes Gratitude can make.
A *Spaniſh* Dame perhaps would promiſe more
Profuſe in Charms, and prodigal of Tears,
Would promiſe all Things—and forget them all.
But I have weaker Charms, and ſimpler Arts;
Guileleſs of Soul, and left as Nature form'd me.
I err, in honeſt Innocence of Aim,
And ſeeking to compoſe, inflame you more.
But to what lengths I may be tam'd—by Benefits,
'Tis in your Power to try, not mine to tell.

I own to thee, that I thought this a charming Paſſage; the uncultivated Nature which is predominant in *Alzira*'s Petitions, and the Contempt which ſhe affects of the Diſſimulation and Diſguiſe of the *European* Ladies, ſtrike the Mind, and attach it voluntarily to Manners and Cuſtoms, which however imperfectly known, affect by their Singularity. I would have a Poet always apply himſelf to find out ſome Subject which may furniſh him with new Ideas. *Voltaire* has hit upon the Secret of making *Alzira* ſay a thouſand bright Things; and while ſhe is in a Doubt concerning the Truth of the Religion which ſhe has embraced, ſhe explains in ſix Verſes what the Learned have hardly been able to comprize in huge Volumes.

Grand Dieu! Condui Zamore au milieu des Deſerts.
Ne ſerois tu le Dieu, que d'un autre Univers?
Les ſeuls Europeens ſont-ils nez pour te plaire?
Es-tu Tiran d'un Monde, & de l'autre le Pere?

Les

Les Vainqueurs, les Vaincus, tous les foibles Humains,
Sont-ils egalement l'Ouvrage de tes Mains?

Great God! be *Zamor*'s Guide amidst his Deserts.
Would'st thou be God of the other World alone?
Are th' *Europeans* only born to please thee?
Art thou one World's Tyrant, and the other's Father?
Victors, and vanquish'd, all the human Race,
Are not they equally thy Handy-Work?

Methinks I hear some ridiculous Bigot exclaiming against these moving Passages, and treating the Author as a *Manichee*. Ignorant Creature! not to know that the only Way for a Writer to raise the Beauty of one Character, is to charge Imperfections upon another, in order to shew the Contrast; and that *Alzira*'s Doubts give a Lustre to the established Faith of *Monteza*.

I conclude my Extract of this Piece, dear *Isaac*, with a Passage worthy to be engraved in Letters of Gold; a Maxim which Sovereigns should always have in their View; which the Inquisitors, Persecutors, and other Monsters of human Nature, ought to meditate profoundly, and which all Mankind ought to follow.

Mais, renoncer aux Dieux, que l'on croit dans son Cœur,
C'est le Crime d'un Lâche, & non pas une Erreur.
C'est trahir a la fois, sous un Masque hipocrite,
Et le Dieu qu'on préfere, & le Dieu que l'on quitte.
C'est mentir au Ciel même, a l'Univers, a soi.

Had I renounc'd my Gods, yet still believ'd 'em;
That had not been an Error, but a Crime
That had been mocking Heaven's whole Host at once;

(The

(The Powers I quitted, and the Power I chose.)
A Change like that had disciplin'd the Tongue
To lye to the whole World, to Heaven, and Conscience.

What Misfortunes, what Guilt might Men have escaped, if they had been convinced of these Principles! For want of this, how much Blood that has been spilt, has been spilt unjustly!

Farewell, dear *Isaac*, and may the God of our Fathers inlighten thy Heart and thy Understanding, load thee with Blessing and Wealth, and give thee a numerous Family.

LETTER LXV.

From JACOB BRITO, *at* Milan, *to* AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris.

IT is a Fortnight ago that I left *Naples*, and am endeavouring to get as soon as I can to *Switzerland*; yet I shall stay a few Days at *Milan*. Since I have been here, I have perceived a great many Things that are worth a Traveller's Attention. The City is large, and well built; the *French* and *Piedmontese*, in whose Power it is to be for some Time longer, are not much loved by the Inhabitants; and the jealous Husbands especially sigh for the happy Moment when the *Germans* are to come and deliver them from those troublesome Gallants.

Since the *French* became Masters of *Milan*, Wine has very much fallen in it's Price, and the Number of Christenings is considerably augmented. A great many Husbands who never had Children, and thought

their

their Wives barren, now enjoy the tender Appellation of Father; which happy Multiplication the Zealots ascribe to the Intercessions of *Charles Borromeo*. The Astrologers say, it is owing to the happy Influences of the Stars *; but the jealous Husbands think that the *French* have much more Share in it, than either the Saints or the Cœlestial Globes. They are therefore impatient for the Return of the *Germans*, and I doubt not but they will cause public Thanksgivings to be observed upon their Arrival, to those Saints in whom they place the greatest Trust.

The *Milanese*, as well as the other *Italians*, have very great Protectors or Patrons with the Deity, to whom they have built magnificent Temples. The principal Advocates whom they have chosen in the Cœlestial Court, formerly lived in their City. Of these *Clou* † (which signifies a Nail) and *Charles Borromeo* are the most distinguished. On the Festival of *Clou*, his Shrine is laid upon the high Altar of the Dome, and the People come from all Parts to prostrate themselves before it. A Multitude of Folks that are possessed with the Devil, come and put themselves into the most astonishing Postures before the Saint, torment themselves, cry, howl, and in short act the same Part at *Milan*, as

* The *Almanac de Milan*, a famous one.

† This requires some Explanation: *Jacob Brito* hearing some Talk at *Milan* about the Holy Nail, thought it was really a Saint, which had formerly existed in Flesh and Bones; but this Saint is only a great Piece of Iron, deified by Avarice, on Pretence that it was one of those which had been drove into the real Cross. There is half a Hundred of those Nails in *Europe*; and every Church that has one, does not scruple to cry down the Rest, in order to prove it's own to be genuine.

the

the Convulsionaries do at *Paris*. Their Diseases are cured after a very pleasant Manner: A Priest throws some Flowers at them, which he plucks out of those that adorn the Saint's Shrine; and the Devils, sensible of the Smell of the Pinks and Violets, become good-natured, peaceable, complaisant, enter into Conversation with the Priests, and talk to them very courteously. There is nothing so engaging to the Curiosity of a Philosopher, as to be a Spectator of those Scenes. The Enthusiasms of the Priestess of *Delphi* were nothing to it. Among those People so possessed, who perform the same Ceremony every Year, there are some Persons to whom they teach several Words of different Languages; the Priests make a great Handle of this Artifice, for the common People are very much surprized to hear a Peasant talk in a Language which he never learned.

Some Time ago, a *Nazarene* Doctor, who was interrogating one of those People possessed by the Devil, forgot the Questions which he was to ask him, and proposed some to him that related to one of his Brethren; who understanding the Watch-word, thought he addressed himself to him, and answered for his Comrade. This Adventure somewhat astonished the Doctor; but he quickly recovered from his Surprize, which was only observed by those who knew the Ridicule and Fraud of those infernal Comedies.

The *Milanese* are altogether as superstitious as their Neighbours; but they accommodate their Devotions to their Pleasures, and as the Saints' Days procure them a great deal of Diversion, they take as much of it as they can, especially the Fair Sex, the Fryars, the Gallants, the Musicians, and the Sellers of Lemonade.

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The Carnival at *Milan* is almost as gay as it is at *Venice*; that is a Season when all People abandon themselves to Pleasure, and even the Nuns in the Convents take their Share of it; for they act Comedies one among another, dress themselves like Harlequins and Scaramouches in Linsey-woolsey, and at that Time Sister *Dorothy* and Sister *Angelica* become Buffoons and Jackpuddings. From *Christmas* till *Lent*, People croud to the Convents to look through the Grates, and see those Companies of Female Comedians, who acquit themselves wonderfully, and often play their Parts better than real Comedian.

The Monks are in nothing inferior to the Nuns as to Masquerading, and they also act Farces publicly in their Convents; the Father Prior acts the Cuckold of a Turn-spit; the young Noviciates act the Parts of *Angelica* and *Spineta* to a Prodigy; and every Soul, even to the Lay-Brothers, is for sharing in the public Diversions. These Monks even extend the Art farther; they go to private Houses to act their Part, and for a Treat you may have a Band of *Franciscans* or *Augustinians* at your House a whole Afternoon; nay, you may pick and choose among all the different Orders of Monks.

Notwithstanding these private Companies of Performers, there are several others of true Comedians dispersed up and down the City. The chief Theatre, which is taken up by the Opera, is magnificent, and the Decorations pompous. The *Milanese* have a particular Way of applauding their Actors and Actresses; they compose Sonnets, or else get some Hackney-Poets to write them; and when a Virtuoso or a Virtuosa has sung perfectly well, they scatter those printed Sonnets all about the Theatre. These Songs are all of them in praise of

of some Actor; and it often happens that in their Poetry, *Julius Cæsar*, *Tamerlane* and *Mahomet* II. are but Striplings compared to Signiors *Scalsi*, *Farenili*, *Sinesini*, and other halves of Men, who have paid very dear for the Advantage of a clear Voice. The *English* have another Manner of applauding, which is much more pleasing to the Actors: Instead of Verses, they scatter Purses full of Ducats; and the Gentlemen Virtuosos are not so fond of Glory, as to prefer Sonnets to Pistoles. They are fain to be content however with the former in *Italy*, where they cannot do better; for there is no *Milanese* that has a Temptation to applaud after the *English* Manner.

There are few Nobility so covetous as those of this Country; they have learned the Way to be saving, and to divert themselves at a small Expence; they get the Charges of all the public Diversions defrayed by a Society of Citizens and Merchants who are called *Faquini*, because they open the Carnival by a Masquerade, in which they are dressed like Peasants. The Nobles lend their Palaces for the Entertainments given by the *Faquini*, but they do not contribute a Shilling to the Expence of them; and some of them would be glad to let their Houses out to pay the Rent, if they thought the thing would not be known.

There is no Place next to *Naples*, where Assassinations are committed so safe and cheap as at *Milan*. It is true the *Germans* and *French* are very much against such sort of Bargains; nevertheless there are Numbers of People easy enough to be found, who for a Pistole will deliver you from an Enemy. When it is attended with any Difficulty or Delay, in order to cut all Ceremony short, they wait near some Church for the Person they intend

to

tend to Murder; and after they have done the Job, they go very coolly int the Church, and make it their Sanctuary.

I have made Enquiry, dear *Monceca*, into the Origin of that Immunity which has been granted to the Temples of several different Religions, and after serious Consideration of the Motives that occasioned this Custom, I do not find any other than the Ambition of the Priests: Those among the *Ægyptians*, the *Greeks*, and the *Israelites* our Forefathers, who had the Care of the Divine Worship, were every whit as ambitious as those among the Moderns: They thought to gain the Respect of private Men, by giving them a Sanctuary in any Diseases that might happen to them, but never distinguished between the Crime and the Misfortune, so that the Assassin found as much Security in the Temple, as the Man that shed Blood involuntarily. The *Nazarene* Monks retained this Custom in Countries where they had the entire Rule. They also granted the same Privileges to their Churches and Monasteries, as were indulged to the Palaces of Sovereigns and their Ambassadors. But the Rights which they arrogated to themselves were so abused by them, that they became noxious to Civil Society; there was no Crime ever so great, but found a Sanctuary among them; whereas Princes, who have a Power to grant Immunities, only protect those Persons, whose Faults are pardonable, and not inconsistent with the Character of the Man of Honour. An Ambassador would certainly not have given any Shelter to *Cartouch*; on the contrary, there is not one but would have caused him to be arrested. But that infamous Robber, in spite of his Crimes, would have met with entire Safety in *Italy* in one of the most paultry Chapels. Alas! dear *Monceca*, is it the Pleasure of the Deity that

his Altars should give a Sanction to Wickedness? Is it not absurd to build Temples to the Almighty, only to furnish Retirement and Shelter for Villains? How cruel is that Superstition, which under the Veil of Piety gives such Authority to Guilt? Happy are those *Nazarene* Nations which have not given into this Error, and which punish Transgressions even in the Sanctuary.

Milan is furnished with as good, and as powerful Reliques as any Town in *Italy*; those of *Charles Borromeo*, which are the most considerable, are kept in a Coffin made of several Pieces of Rock Crystal, joined together by Plates of Silver gilt. The Body of this *Nazarene* is still to be seen entire through the Crystal; indeed notwithstanding the extraordinary Care that was taken in embalming it, Part of his Nose has by length of Time received some Damage. A Monk of whom I asked the Reason, assured me that God had permitted this, because the Saint in his Life-time had been too fond of sweet Odours, and that the Loss of one half of his Nose was the Punishment of his Sensuality. If the Deity were thus to stigmatise the Failings of all the *Nazarene* Saints, I really believe there are few of the canonised Fryars that would have a Tongue left in their Mouths, for they have been generally prodigious Gormandisers, and great Lyars.

If the *Jews*, dear *Monceca*, had a Taste for Relics, we might find some at *Milan* that would suit our Synagogues perfectly well. *Moses*'s Rod is kept in the Cathedral of this City: It is true, that it is not proved to Demonstration to be the same Rod which was made Use of by that Prophet, for they shew another at *Rome* in the Church of St. *John de Lateran*; therefore the surest Way not to be mistaken would be to buy both, or else charitably to suppose, what is very possible, that the Legislator

had

had two Rods. In the collecting of Reliques of such Antiquity, one must not stand upon Trifles, nor be too critical, but take the whole in the Lump as the *Nazarenes* do. If we were minutely to examine every Thing that is said touching *Moses*'s Rod, we should be at least as much confounded as they are. The Rabbi *Abarbanel* has wrote a long Dissertation upon this Rod, in which he tells a great many extravagant Things, and affirms magisterially, that *Moses* carried it to the Mountain where he died, and that it was laid in that Prophet's Tomb. I could wish that the Rabbi *Abarbanel* would do me the Favour to tell me, who revealed this Fact to him; till then we may safely make shift with the two Rods which the *Nazarenes* have; and if a third appears, it is but buying that too.

There is also a Relique of much more Note in another Church *; it is the Serpent which *Moses* set up in the Desert. As to this Relique there are not two of the Sort as there are of the Rod; but let the *Nazarenes* say what they will of it, I question whether it was cotemporary with that Prophet. I should rather take it for a Memorial of some extraordinary Event, as the Goose of the Capitol. Therefore I would not advise our Synagogues to offer to trouble themselves with this Piece of Antiquity, which I think to be *Roman*, rather than *Ægyptian*. This famous Serpent, which is of Brass, is placed upon a Column of Marble. How stark blind are some Men! Let us pity them, dear *Monceca*, rather than despise them. Folly is the very Appendix of Human Nature. Happy are they to whom Heaven has granted a little more Understanding than to some of their Fellow-Creatures.

* In the Vestry of the Church of St. *Ambrose*.

Fare thee well, dear *Monceca*; as ſoon a I get into *Switzerland* I ſhall write to thee. Live content and happy.

LETTER LXVI.

From AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris, *to* ISAAC ONIS, *a Caraite, formerly a Rabbi, at* Conſtantinople.

SINCE I heard from thee laſt, I doubt not but thou art arrived in *Ægypt*; and I write to thee with a firm Confidence that there my Letter will find thee. Our Friend, *Jacob Brito*, who is on the Point of leaving *Italy*, and going to *Switzerland*, has made very good Remarks in his Travels, which he has been ſo kind as to communicate to me. I hope thou wilt not have leſs Complaiſance, and that thou wilt communicate to us both every thing that thou findeſt remarkable or conſiderable in *Ægypt*.

I ſhall endeavour to get as much Improvement as poſſible by my ſtay at *Paris*. I was yeſterday at the public Court of the Parliament, and heard two of the moſt celebrated Advocates of the Kingdom plead: I was very much pleaſed with their Speeches, which were really beautiful; the Style was clear and accurate, and ſo eloquent, that all the Audience applauded thoſe two able Advocates. Yet to compare *French* Oratory with that of *Cicero* and *Demoſthenes*, their Merit appears to be much inferior to that of the Ancients; for they have neither their Majeſty, nor the Sublimity of their Genius, nor their Fire of Imagination. Being fully

fully convinced, after Inquiry into the Cause of the Difference, that it could not be this, namely that *Cicero* and *Demosthenes* were Men not to be matched, because Nature had not forgot how she formed their Brains, I discovered that the Advantages of the ancient Orators were owing to their Situation, and to the Subjects on which they treated.

There are some Subjects which spontaneously furnish the Mind with Ideas that are grand, sublime, and magnificent, and which do not need the Disposition of Phrases, and the Harmony of Words to elevate the Mind, since the plainest Terms are sufficient to express them. In speaking of the Divinity, for Instance, all the Ideas which the Understanding receives of him, engage it, seize it, and in a Manner transport it beyond it's Sphere. Then the most common Diction, provided it be plain and distinct, and clearly conveys the Ideas, is sufficient to give Energy to the Discourse, and the plainest Eloquence becomes sublime. Of the Truth of this, we have a decisive Instance in the Book of *Genisis*, where God says, *Let there be Light*; and *there was Light*. *Gen.* cap. v. ver. 3. In this Expression, which even the Pagans own to be sublime, the Obedience of the Things created seems to conform to the Will of the Creator in the same Moment. What Ideas are there not conveyed to the Mind in such simple Terms? *The Power of God, the Creation of Light, Clearness formed by a single Word, and granted to the Universe by the Goodness of an immense and omnipotent Being.* The Choice of Words, and an affected Turn of the Phrase, would have diminished the sublime Simplicity of this Page.

If it be confessed that the Subject is of infinite Service to the Orator, and can in some measure render him eloquent without the Help of Art, i

will be easy to discover the true Reason of the Superiority of the Ancients over the Moderns.

An Advocate of the Parliament of *Paris* has a notable cause to defend, when he pleads for the Fortune or Estate of a private Man. If it be an Affair wherein any Person of Distinction is concerned, it is the Subject of a celebrated Plea. But whatsoever Suit an Advocate may defend at *Paris*, there is not one Cause, the Merits of which stripped of it's Ornaments, can inspire the Audience with a certain Greatness of Mind, seize their Attention at once, and raise it to Notions which are in a Manner unknown to them. What Mind can help being affected, when an Orator says that he pleads for the Fortune of a King? The Beginning of *Cicero*'s Oration for King *Dejotarus*, and the whole Exordium of the said Plea, which is a Master-piece of Eloquence, is not so much obliged for it's Beauty to the Assistance of Art, as to the Dignity of the Subject. Let an Advocate prepossess his Audience in the sublimest Terms, *let him plead for a* Frenchman *oppressed with the Stripes of Fortune, a Victim to the Capriciousness of Destiny; were he to set him off as a Man endowed with Vitues that put his Persecutors to the Blush; and were he to interest the Gods themselves as well as Men in the Arret which is to decide the Fate of his Client*, he may by the Choice of harmonious Terms, and by the beautiful Cadence of his Phrases, strike the Ear agreeably, but he will never engage the Mind, and never raise it to so high a Degree, as that Orator will, who only says, *I plead for the Fortune of a King*, &c. There is a natural Sublimity in these Words; they offer above twenty Ideas to the Understanding; they are expressive of the Grandeur of the Subject treated of; they represent to the Mind a King, who

who is the Judge of others, obliged to defend himself, and in short they engage it in Favour of the Person attacked, on account of the Dignity and Majesty of his Rank.

As lofty as is the Beginning of the Oration for *Dejotarus*, it perhaps cost *Cicero* less Pains than the Preamble of his Oration for *Archias*. But in the first he pleaded for a King, and in the second for a Poet. The Beginning of the first *Cataline* Oration is judged by all Mankind to be a Piece of perfect Eloquence; I grant it is, but what was the Subject of it? What was the Reason of that celebrated Apostrophe of the Orator? No less than a Republic which was Mistress of the World, in Danger of immediate Destruction from a Rebel.

The Dignity of the Subjects treated of frequently determines the Degree of the Orator's Eloquence; and no wonder therefore when we see in *Demosthenes* and *Cicero* such Passages as strike and engage us more strongly than those we meet with in the Moderns. They were neither more learned, nor more witty than the latter, but they went upon Subjects which furnished both Wit and Learning, and led naturally to the Sublime. It would be easy to shew that in the ordinary Causes pleaded by *Cicero*, he is not superior to *Patru* and *Errard*; and if both the latter had lived at *Rome*, they would not have been inferior to him in any thing.

The Advocates General of the Parliaments have it more in their Power, than meer Advocates, to enjoy the Advantages of the *Greek* and *Roman* Orators; for they are sometimes employed in Causes of Weight and Importance to the Good of the State, and in the Discourses which they make in their Remonstrances, they are capable of speaking with a certain Dignity, which comes up pretty

near to the *Roman* Grandeur. But their Genius is impoverished and weakend with a Number of trifling Niceties, and an insignificant Detail of Formalities. It is with the *French* Magistrates as with the Scholastic Philosophers; and take away their common beaten Maxims, they know not where to fix themselves. Were it not for *Aristotle*, a Regent of *Philosophy* is apt to think that the Light of Nature only serves to mislead us; and the generality of the Gownmen would not presume to hold an Opinion which they do not find in *Cujas*, *Moulin*, and *Argentre*.

Among the Ancients, the Freedom of Thinking was one of the principal Causes of Eloquence. The *Greeks* and the *Romans* were not so fond of leaning upon the Authority of other Men, as of building upon Reasons that seemed to convince their own private Judgment. There are not so many Quotations in all the Pleadings of *Cicero* and *Demosthenes*, as in the first Page of those of *le Maitre*. Of what Importance is it, that such an Opinion was maintained by such a Doctor, such a Father of the Church, or such a Lawyer? If it be contrary to Reason, and the public Benefit, it ought to be no more valued than that of an Ignoramus.

It is a Folly to go about to justify the Failings of some Men; for what is good in them, there is an absolute Necessity of commending them; but to deify their Defects is ridiculous Idolatry. What! because forsooth *du Moulin* and *d'Argentre* are not agreed in certain Questions, must I not dare to determine in a Point which to me appears clear and evident? Must I spend whole Years rather before I come to a Determination? An Inquiry so insignificant, blunts the penetrating Faculty of the Mind, and exhausts its Vivacity and Force.

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The *English* take a surer Way to attain to the Sciences; they only grant their Consent to Truth. The Authority of all the Authors both ancient and modern, could not force them not to make Use of their Reason. They judge of Things by the Ideas which they have of themselves, and not by the Notions of other People. The Liberty which the *English* Nation enjoys, might also be a very great Assistance to such as apply themselves to Eloquence. A Speaker at the Head of the Commons, who talks for the Welfare and Safety of his Country, who informs the Sovereign of the Necessities of his Subjects, who renews the Assurances of that mutual Alliance, and reciprocal Conduct between the Prince and the People, treats of Matters which are of equal Importance to the Subject of the *Greek* and *Roman* Orators. It would not therefore be an extraordinary Thing to find Eloquence carried to a farther Degree in *England* than it is in *France*. Ambition itself may be of very great Service towards it. An able Advocate at *Paris* gains five or six hundred thousand Livres at most in his whole Life-time; but be he ever so eloquent, he has only a daily Salary for his Learning and his Talents and that is all the Reward he must expect. In *England* many Honours are annexed to Persons of a distinguished Genius. An able Orator may be chose for the Advocate of his Country; and his Eloquence promotes him to a Rank in Life, which nothing but pure Merit can lead the Way to. If the Offices of President *au Mautier* in *France* were bestowed upon those Advocates who distinguished themselves most, I doubt not but the Bar would make a more illustrious Figure than it does now. The Ambition of attaining to the Chief Office of the Magistracy would be a greater Incitement to the Study of Eloquence, and the Advocate when he came once to know that

he was born and cut out for great Employments, would entertain greater and more noble Ideas.

The Orators are to blame, as well as others of the Learned, in setting Money up for their Mark, rather than Glory. I have been acquainted with a great many Authors in my Time; and when I have talked to them of some of their Works which I thought were not so accurate as they should be, they said, *What would you have us to do? The Booksellers give us but half a Pistole a Sheet. What can one perform that is* good *at that* Price? It is the same, I find, with the Advocates, *I have but ten Pistoles Fee for a Pleading*, says one, *shall I sweat and toil in a Cause for such a poor Sum as that? I plead as I am paid, and the Merchandize I give is worth the Money I receive.*

It is impossible therefore that an Orator in *France* can apply himself to perfect his Art, and to get an Estate at the same Time. It must be his Option either to resolve to be poor, or not to produce any but imperfect Pieces. It is impossible that the great number of Causes which many of the Advocates undertake, should be defended as they ought; for one Advocate often pleads more Causes in a Year, than *Cicero* and *Demosthenes* did in the whole Course of their Lives.

Eloquence has been carried much farther in the Pulpit, than at the Bar. The Composers of Sermons, Panegyrics, and funeral Orations, were either in eminent Posts, or else expected that they should be advanced to such by Means of their Talents: Their Care was to please, and not to amass Wealth; and to perfect their Talents was their only Study. They had another Advantage also over the Orators of the Bar: All their Subjects furnished them with a vast Fund of Matter, which was sublime, and enough to elevate the Mind by being barely contemplated.

contemplated. Is any thing more grand and majestic than the Explanation of the Orders, and Decrees of the Deity? Any Thing that touches, strikes, or more engages Men than the principal Rules of Morality, and the fundamental Points of their Religion? *Bourdaloue*, *Bossuet*, *Flechier*, &c. were much more perfect in their Kind than *Patru*, *le Maitre*, and *Errard*, yet they were no more eloquent than the latter; but their Subjects were more grand and extensive; and they could afford as much Time to polish their Works, as was necessary to perfect them. The Case is not the same with the Advocates; *Patru* who was for preferring Glory to Riches, and who content with a Reputation, went through a certain Number of Pleadings with very great Care, both lived and died a poor Man. He was assisted by a Poet, whose Generosities repaired the Injuries done to him by the Caprices of Fortune *.

What a Scandal is it to the *French* that such a Man as *Patru* was almost ready to be starved, while *Chapellain*, and a Parcel of forty Authors were allowed considerable Pensions? This dear *Isaac*, is an affecting Instance of those Prejudices, and that ill Taste which prevail sometimes in the most polite and the wisest Ages. That of *Lewis* XIV. was fertile in Wits, and he was a Monarch that rewarded them like a generous magnificent Prince; but he almost forgot one of the greatest Men in his Kingdom, while he heaped his Favours on the worst of all Poets †.

Farewell, dear *Isaac*; live content and happy, and let me hear from thee, oftner.

* M. *Patru* wanting Money, had a Mind to sell his Library; *Boileau* hearing the Resolution of this poor Scholar, bought his Library, but would never take the Books till *Patru* was dead.

† *Chapellain* had very considerable Pensions allowed him to his dying Day.

LETTER LXVII.

From AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris, *to* JACOB BRITO, *at* Geneva.

THE Manners of the *Parisian* Nuns, dear *Brito*, are much more regular than those of the *Venetians*; not that they think their Condition more agreeable than the others, but the Check and Restraint which they live under at *Paris*, make them virtuous in spite of themselves, and support that Discretion of theirs, which could not resist the Temptations that are too strong for the *Venetian* Ladies. The Nunneries in this City are Prisons full of innocent Victims, devoted to Avarice or Ambition. The *French*, who have Good-nature and Compassion for the Unfortunate, depart from that Character in nothing but the cruel Use which they make of those Convents.

Half of the Fathers at *Paris* are as barbarous to their Daughters as certain People of *Peru*, who keep the Women they take in War for their Concubines, maintain the Children they have by them as delicately as possible, till they are thirteen Years of Age, and then eat them *. The Practice of the *French* is much the same; when they have three or four Daughters, they get a Husband for the Eldest, or for the Favourite, and strictly confine all the rest, whom they decree from their Birth to suffer a thousand Torments. *I do not think*, says *Montaigne*, *that it is so cruel to eat a Man after he*

* The History of the *Incas*, lib. i. cap. 12.

is

is dead, as when he is alive. I am of his Opinion, dear *Brito*, and to tell thee my real Sentiment, I would ſooner forgive a Father for killing his Infant the Moment it was born, than to nurſe it to ſuch an Age, to prepare it for the Sufferings of horrid Torments as long as it lived; for that is really the Caſe of moſt of the Nuns: And of this I can aſſure thee from my own Knowledge, having been many Times in Convents with the Chevalier *de Maiſin*, who made me acquainted with two or three Kinſwomen of his, that are doomed to paſs all their Days in Torments.

I ſaid once to a certain Nun, 'You are not ſo 'unhappy as you imagine; while you are ſequeſtred 'from the World and it's Perplexities, your Life 'ſlides on ſerenely; nothing ought to trouble you; 'you are not diſturbed by any Family Cares. In 'ſhort, you have the very three Things in which 'the chieſeſt Happineſs conſiſts, *viz.* Virtue, Health, 'and Competency. You are miſtaken, *ſaid ſhe*, 'I have neither of theſe three Ingredients. As for 'my Virtue, it is a Virtue *per Force*, and not what 'I have acquired by Choice and Pre-engagement; 'it is therefore rather a Conſtraint which hinders 'me from ſubmitting to the Temptation, without 'depriving me of the Inclination, than a real 'Hatred that I have to Sin. The Gates are a 'Guard to my Chaſtity and Modeſty; yet I do not 'find my Heart the leſs tender. Of what avail is 'therefore a Virtue, which can be of no Service to-'wards claiming the Mind? a Virtue, which is 'ſuch no longer, than while it has not the Liberty 'of becoming Vice?

'My Health has been deſtroyed for a long Time: 'What with Melancholy, the Regret for being 'confined without deſerving it, and what with 'the Deſpair of being reſtored to Liberty, my

'Blood

'Blood is corrupted; I have generally such a sinking of Spirits, that I am ready to die, besides frequent terrible Fits of the Head-ach; and before I have seen much of the Winter, my Physicians tell me, that I shall not live till the Spring; yet I have often baffled their Predictions, though by what Accident I know not.

'It is true I have what is necessary, but what does it avail to Happiness, for the Body to be nourished, and the Mind only fed with Gall and Wormwood? Moreover, how many Plagues and Mortifications do I suffer for this Competency? Being forced Day and Night to obey the Call of a Bell, I scarce have closed my Eye-lids, but I must rise, though it be as dark as Pitch, to hasten to Mattins, where for an Hour I mumble some *Latin* Prayers, of which I hardly understand one Word; and in three or four Hours after I have got to bed again, I must return to the Offices. My whole Life, in short, is spent in reciting my Breviary, and in hearing the dull Speeches of my Lady Abbess, a fantastical, moody, odd, peevish, and superstitious Creature, like all old Women, who offers to God the Torments which she makes me suffer*.

'Consider now, Sir, *continued this Nun*, if my Condition is so serene as you imagine, and whether I enjoy the three main Ingredients of sovereign Happiness? I own, *said I*, that I am deceived in the Notion I had of it; but for God's Sake pray tell me, how you could find in your Heart to make Vows that would render you so unhappy? I will now, *said she*, give you the History of the Vocation of three Fourths of the Nuns to

* *Offre à Dieu les Tourmens qu'elle me fait soufrir.* Boileau Sat. x.

'the Monastic State; for they are called to it in the 'same Manner as I was.

'As soon as I came to be six or seven Years of 'Age, my Mother, who was absolutely determined 'that I should go into a Convent, whipped me 'regularly twice a-day; the least Fault that I com 'mitted was punished with the utmost Severity, and 'with this Rigour was I treated till I was nine 'Years old. At length I was told that I was to go 'into a Convent to be a Boarder there with one 'of my Aunts who was a Nun, and had been in-'formed of the State of Life for which I was de-'signed. The two first Months that I passed in 'the Monastery, I thought myself in Paradise. 'My Aunt, instead of Slaps on the Face, gave me 'Sugar-plumbs; there was now no more Chastise-'ment, no more Reprimands; I was treated with 'extraordinary Tenderness, and blessed the happy 'Moment that I entered the Convent. My Mo-'ther sometimes took me out with her to dine at 'her House; but those very Days were Days of 'Sorrow and Affliction, for I always returned in 'Tears to my Aunt, who comforted me for the 'Cuffs and Chidings which my Mother gave me 'in Abundance. In fine, she told me, when I was 'sixteen Years of Age, that I must now take my 'Choice, that is to say, return to my Mother, or 'commence a Nun. You will easily judge that I 'did not hesitate which to do, and I said I would 'take the Veil. My Mother before she consented 'to my Option, observed great Ceremony; she re-'fused at first to grant me my Request, and I was 'actually obliged to intreat her, for the very Thing 'that she longed most of all to grant me. At 'last, after many Petitions she said she was wil-'ling that I should be a Nun; but that I might 'never repent my Vocation, she added, that she

'wil-

'wished first to shew me the World a little, 'that I might not determine myself without 'knowing why or wherefore. She forced me to 'go for a Fortnight to her House; and really 'that Fortnight fully confirmed me in my Purpose. 'She made me rise every Morning at six o'Clock: 'A cursed Jade of a Milliner, on Pretence of set-'ting me off suitable to a Miss of my Quality, 'pulled my Locks for three or four Hours toge-'ther: A Pair of Stays was made for me in which 'I had scarce Liberty to breathe. There is a Ne-'cessity, said my Mother, for dressing with Care, 'to go abroad. She carried me to pass the Day 'in some Assemblies of old Gossips, where I sate 'with a demure Countenance for five or six Hours 'together.

'At last came the happy Day, when it was in my 'Power to chuse either the World or a Convent. 'I quitted my Stays and all my Finery, bid adieu 'for ever to that devilish Milliner, and came back 'to my Aunt. How happy, *said I to her*, is it to 'be free from that Constraint of which so many 'Women are Idolizers! What! is this a World 'that People should ever be sorry to be separated 'from? They that are so, must either be very silly, 'or know but little of it.

'Having these Ideas, I made Vows that nothing 'should ever divorce me from this House. I spent 'my first Years in Tranquility, but when I came 'to be nineteen or twenty Years of Age, I began to 'find that I had been deluded. The People of 'the World, whom I saw in the Parlour, scattered 'the Mist from my Eyes; my Heart felt certain 'Motions of which it was not Master; the singing 'of the Birds, the Sight of Men, and of myself 'too, when I turned to my Looking-glass; and 'above all, my own Heart told me that I was not

'made

'made to be insensible: But alas! to what Purpose 'should I have been sensible! My Desires would 'only have been an Aggravation of my Misfortune. 'I endeavoured at first to dispel my Uneasiness by 'reading; but the more Discoveries I made, the 'more was my Mind disturbed. The Books that 'pleased me most, were Romances; of which I 'was fond to the last Degree, so that I bedewed 'the most tender Passages with my Tears. A Lady 'of my Acquaintance was so complaisant as to lend 'me the Books, and I soon exhausted her Library. 'My Vexation for having quitted the World, and 'for being the melancholy Victim of the Ambition 'and Avarice of my Family, has made my Life a 'Burthen to me. I expect nothing to set me at 'Liberty but Death, which I wish for, much ra-'ther than Fear. My Mother at the same Time is 'as unhappy as myself; she had made a Sacrifice of 'me for the better Settlement of my eldest Sister in 'Marriage, who died a few Days after the Cere-'mony; so that my Family has no Child left 'but me, and the Estates goes to a remote col-'lateral Branch which she hates, and has Reason 'to complain of. It seems as if Heaven had taken 'Care to revenge my Cause.'

I know not, dear *Brito*, what thou thinkest of this barbarous Practice of the *Nazarene* Papists, in confining their Daughters. But, in my Opinion, he must have the Heart of a *Cannibal* who invented a Custom, which, under a Pretence of devoting Souls to God, renders a Number of innocent People for ever unhappy. I have often talked with the *Nazarenes* concerning this Usage, so contrary to Reason and the Law of Nature. They endeavour to justify it by Reasons of State; *if*, say they, *all the Daughters were to be married, Families could not support themselves in a certain Rank, and they would be obliged*

to make unsuitable Matches. Wretched Argument! which has no other Foundation than the stupid Vanity of some Nobles infatuated with their Condition; a Vanity as prejudicial as the Plague to the Good of Society. How do the *English*, the *Swedes*, the *Prussians*, the *Danes*, and other Nations do? Are they less attentive to preserve the Privileges of their Nobility, than the *French* or the *Spaniards*? No, surely; but they take more Care not to suffer themselves to be blinded by old Prejudices. If there was no Nun in *France*, a Nobleman indeed would not marry a Girl with a hundred thousand Crowns Fortune; nor, on the other Hand, would he be obliged to give such a Fortune to his Sister. If we look into Families in general, and consider the Estates that come into, or go out of such Families, during the Course of a Century, we shall find it much the same. Besides, of what Service is it to the State and the Republic, that certain private Men accumulate immense Wealth? This is rather contrary to the Interest of the Public; for it is the better for a Kingdom, where it's Wealth is divided into just Proportions.

Let us leave the *Nazarenes*, dear *Brito*, in their own Blindness: Is it our Business, whom they so cruelly persecute, to endeavour to open their Eyes? But why should we wonder at it, when they thus persecute even their own Children? Thou canst not imagine how many Convents of Nuns there are in *France*; every Town is full of them, and I fancy they are as numerous as those of the Monks.

Take Care of thyself, dear *Brito*; live content and happy; and may Heaven grant thee a large Family, of which thou wilt make a better Use than the *Nazarenes* do.

LETTER

LETTER LXVIII.

From JACOB BRITO, *at* Geneva, *to* AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris.

IT is now six Days that I have been at *Geneva*, where my Stay has been longer than I intended. The City was formerly very ill built, but for some Years past has been embellished with a great Number of new Houses, the Architecture of which is of a very good Taste. The Fortifications of *Geneva* are good and regular; Men are perpetually at work upon them; and the Citizens contribute with Pleasure to the necessary Expences of finishing them, having renewed the Imposts that were laid for supporting the Expences for ten Years *. The *Geneveſe* might spare themselves the Charge of these Fortifications, which cost them an infinite Sum of Money; for their Alliance with *France*, and the Protestant Cantons are their Security against the Insults and Invasions of the *Savoyards*, their common Enemy, from whose Dominion they formerly revolted.

There are two Reasons that oblige *France* and the *Switzers* to protect this Republic; it it not the Interest of the *French* to suffer the *Savoyards* and the *Piedmonteſe* to gain Ground on this Side of the *Alps*; nor is it the Interest of the Protestant Cantons to suffer a City to be destroyed or subdued, which may

* This Letter was wrote before the late Troubles in *Geneva*.

be

be looked upon as the Metropolis of the *Calvinist* Religion.

Therefore, as both Religion and State-Policy conspire to the Defence of the *Genevese*, I cannot imagine what is their Motive for rendering their City as strong as the best Place in *Europe*. I am apt to think that, according to the Rules of true Policy, their Conduct is to be condemned. *France* had never been tempted to break her Alliance with *Geneva*, if the latter had still remained in it's former Condition. Who can tell whether hereafter she will not alter her Mind? To expose a fine Lady to the View of a Gentleman, whose Heart is very apt to be inflamed, and who may hit upon the Secret of making himself happy, is running a very great Risque. A Day may come, perhaps, when the *Genevese* will repent their having decked and trimmed their City like a new Bride: Some King of *France* may happen to fall in Love with her, and to marry her contrary to the Rules. I know that the Protestant Cantons would oppose the Match, but perhaps it would be out of their Power to hinder it's taking Effect; and when such a Thing is once done, it would be as difficult to wrest *Geneva* out of the Hands of a *French* Monarch, as it was heretofore for *Menelaus* to rescue his dear *Helen* from the Clutches of the *Trojans*. I have sometimes talked jestingly with several of the Citizens about this pretended Union. They told me, they had nothing to fear in that Respect, and that were their City in it's utmost State of Perfection, it would not make *France* amends for the Loss of the Alliance of the Protestant Cantons, and for the Charges she would be obliged to be at to make herself Mistress of it.

The principal Commerce of *Geneva*, consists in Silks, Books, and several other Sorts of Merchandize, of which they send great Quantities into all foreign

foreign Countries; but it is remarkable that they print few Books in this City that treat of Matters relating to Proteſtantiſm; for it would be a hard Matter to vend them, becauſe the Bookſellers of *England* and *Holland* have it in their Power to furniſh all the *Nazarene* Proteſtants, and eſpecially the *French* Refugees, with ſuch Books to better Advantage. At *Geneva* therefore they print the Works of all the *Spaniſh* and *Italian* Doctors; *Sanches*, *Eſcobar*, *Suares*, *Molina*, *Bellarmin*, *Cajetano*, &c. are obliged to the Proteſtants for perpetuating their Works, which the *Geneveſe* print juſt as they are, inſomuch that, notwithſtanding the Difference of Religion, they never alter a ſingle Word, even in the Books which are the moſt oppoſite to theirs.

But the *Nazarene* Papiſts are ſeldom ſo ſincere, for they augment or diminiſh all Writings that paſs through their Hands juſt as pleaſes them. In the Infancy of Printing, they added a Paſſage of twenty Lines in the Hiſtory of *Joſephus*, but were afterwards obliged to own the Uncertainty of that Paſſage, which is not to be met with in the Generality of their MSS. The Moliniſts in the laſt Century publiſhed ſeveral Editions of *Janſenius*, in which were the famous Propoſitions that were condemned; but in the former Editions a Man muſt have the Talent of making White Black to find them there.

The *Geneveſe*, in the general, are fat and luſty; they are reckoned ill-natured and ſtingy, but it is a Character which they do not deſerve, for they are polite and affable, and much more ſo than all their Neighbours. It is true that they have a Suſpicion of Foreigners of the *Romiſh* Religion; but they are to be pardoned for miſtruſting their moſt mortal Enemies, who have more than once endeavoured to lay Snares for them. They are very frugal and temperate,

temperate, and affect to appear particularly grave; which is a Passion that often makes them run into a ridiculous Excess.

One Failing, which is common to all the Inhabitants of *Geneva*, is the too violent Hatred they bear to the Popish Religion. They fondly indulge themselves in such Notions as seem to be the most contrary to it; and when it happens to be the Subject of Conversation, they talk like Enthusiasts. I do not blame them for rejecting a Faith which they think defective and erroneous; but I could wish they would act more philosophically, and refute Error, without hating the Person that is so unhappy as to be tainted with it.

I think that all Mankind may be considered as forming in some Sort but one single plain Religion, because they all adore the same Deity, and differ only in point of Worship and Ceremonies. Happy are they who have Rules and Precepts to lead them the nearest Way to Felicity; but because they know more than others, and have more Ways to obtain their Salvation, they ought rather to pity than despise, such as have more Pains to take than themselves to get into the cœlestial Path.

I own to thee, dear *Monceca*, that I cannot but compare Heaven to a stately Palace, with four Gates that look to the four different Parts of the World; one may enter this fine Structure from the East, West, North, and South, but the Roads leading to it are not equally good. We *Jews* walk in the Eastern Road, which the Divinity has made smooth for us. The *Nazarenes* come to it by the Western Road, which is ruggid and bad. The *Turks* pass by the North Road, which is still worse; and all their Religions which are in the *Indies* and *America*, walk in the South Road, which is full of Sloughs, and surrounded with Precipices. In this Road great

great Numbers of People lose their Way, but yet there are some that arrive at the coelestial Palace, notwithstanding the Difficulties of so dangerous a Road.

The *Nazarene* Papists, and our Rabbies, condemn this Opinion; they think that God ought to have no Compassion on a Creature that endeavours to serve him in another Religion. And there is a certain Fryar at *Rome*, that would rather choose to deny the Being of a God, than allow a Place in Heaven to some *Nazarene* Protestants, who have lived Examples of the most accomplished Virtue in this World.

When an *Italian* wants to obtain any Thing of his Family, he threatens to retire to *Geneva*, *me n'andero in Genevra*. And when a Father hears his Son say so, he is as much affected by it as if he said, *I will go to all the Devils*. The *Italians* might easily divest themselves, if they would, of the ill Opinion which they entertain of the *Geneveſe*. Were they but to make ever so little Enquiry into the Behaviour of the People, they would find that the Conversation of few of them is so pure and rational as theirs is, whom they take to be Devils spewed out of Hell. There is no Medium in the Decision of the *Italians*; whosoever is not entirely of their Faith, they give headlong to *Beelzebub*.

I will now entertain thee with a Story of a *Piedmonteſe* Preacher, which thou wilt think perhaps is a Fiction, but I assure thee that I was a Witness of the Fact*. He preached upon Hell Torments; and after having enumerated all the Cauldrons, Forks, and Firebrands in that infernal Mansion, he said, 'My Brethren, perhaps you will be curious to know

* In a little Village called *St. Julian*, half a League from *Geneva*, in the Territory of *Savoy*.

'the

‘ the Manner how *Satan* makes the Damned
‘ Wretches pass in Review before him, when he has
‘ a Desire to know the Number of them. This
‘ Devil first causes the Drum to be beat by *Mahomet*, who is his chief Drummer: The *Jews* file
‘ off first with their Rabbies at their Head, and as
‘ they pass along, the Devils run the Prongs of
‘ great Iron Folks into their Fundaments. Then
‘ come the *Turks*, who receive the like Punishment.
‘ After them the *Heretics* pass, dragging heavy
‘ Chains. The Devils pour melted Lead into their
‘ Mouths, to punish them for the Blasphemies they
‘ uttered in their Life time against the Saints, and
‘ particularly against St. *Julian*, the Patron of this
‘ Church, whom you see seated in his Niche there,
‘ and whom you do not take so much Care of as you
‘ ought. I found but six Livres and ten Sous
‘ last Week in his Trunk; and if this be the Case
‘ always, you are in a very fair Way, my dear Brethren, to make melted Lead scarce in Hell. Do
‘ you think that St. *Julian*, your Patron, will pardon you for neglecting him so much? If you do,
‘ you will find yourselves very much mistaken. As
‘ for my own Part, I furnish him with all the Oil
‘ that I am able, and he is always well lighted.
‘ But the Festival of the Place is just at Hand;
‘ Who is to clothe him? Am I to do it? No truly; it is out of my Power to do it; and I can
‘ assure you, that if you do not take proper Care, he
‘ will soon be bare-arsed. You will get a fine Character, my Brethren when the Inhabitants of the
‘ Neighbourhood see how you neglect your Patron:
‘ You buy new Petticoats every Day for your
‘ Wives, you grant them what they desire of you;
‘ you do very well; but do ye think that when a
‘ great Ladle full of melted Lead is popped into
‘ your Mouths, they will bring you a Glass of Le-
‘ monade

'monade to cool your Throats. Then you will 'repent of having by your Negligence deserved to 'be ranked among Heretics: *Alas! Great St.* Julian (you will say) *what a Sinner was I, that I 'did not give you the Money that I laid out upon 'Lace for* Kate! *And that I did not make you a 'Present of that Piece of Stuff which I brought from 'the Fair.* All this Repentance will be to no purpose then, dear Brethren; St. *Julian* will not thank 'you for it, and you must shew your Zeal for 'him now while you live. I hear some of you 'complaining that the Harvests are bad, *We have 'had no Wine* (say you) *this Year; and two Years 'ago we had no Corn.* I am apt to believe it, 'Brethren; but it will be much worse for the future. Can you sincerely imagine, that St. *Julian* 'will address himself to God to ask for Rain, 'Sun-shine, warm Weather, or cold Weather, as 'the Case shall require, for People that let him 'wear a Coat till it is three Years old? You are 'mistaken my Brethren; you will be treated like 'Heretics, for whom there is no Salvation, and 'who were from your Mother's Womb the Devil's Inheritance, for as soon as a *Calvinist* or a '*Lutheran* comes into the World, the Devil registers him in the other World in his Book, as 'an Estate that is fallen to him.'

Such Discourses as this render Instruction contemptible, base, and cheap. The Temple where the Word of God ought to be explained to Men, becomes a Stage for Mountebanks. It is impertinent to say that the common People ought to be preached to, in a different Manner from that in which we discourse to People of Learning. A Moral, which is pure and easy to be comprehended, may be expressed without stuffing the Mind with a hundred ridiculous Stories invented by Avarice. The

new Coat which this Preacher wanted to be bought for St. *Julian*, might have been productive of another for himself into the Bargain. But what! ought a Priest for vile Lucre to depart from that Character, which puts him in a Rank of Respect? Ought a Minister of God's Word to blend it with gross Fables, enough to disgust not only those who are not of the *Nazarene* Faith, but such also as are most convinced of it?

One cannot be too careful in examining the Learning and Capacity of those to whom the Liberty of preaching is granted; for they thereby become the common Guides of the Understanding of a whole People, and they are to be considered as the chief external Objects that produce Ideas in the Minds of a Number of People, who see and know nothing but by them. Of what Importance therefore is it to the Good of Society, that the Notions which they give them be just, and conformable to right Reason?

Take Care of thy Health, dear *Monceca*, and live content and happy.

LETTER LXIX.

From ISAAC ONIS, *now a Caraite at* Alexandria, *but formerly a Rabbi, at* Constantinople, *to* AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris.

THE Winds have favoured me to such a Degree, dear *Monceca*, that in nine Days Time I am arrived at *Alexandria* from *Smyrna*. This City heretofore

heretofore of ſuch Fame for the great Men it produced, for the Magnificence of it's Buildings, and for the Glory of it's Founder, is nothing more than a confuſed Pile of unſightly Ruins, Columns, Chapiters, Baſes, Remnants of Corniſhes, *&c.* all which Remains of Antiquity lie ſcattered about, and topſy-turvy, buried partly in the Sand, or employed to Purpoſes very different from thoſe to which the ancient Inhabitants had devoted them. The Ruins of ancient *Alexandria* are not like thoſe of Old *Rome*, of which there are Fragments ſtill ſubſiſting that retain a Part of their former Beauty. It may be ſaid of *Alexandria*, as *Virgil* ſaid of *Troy* after it's Ruin *. The Fields and the Place where this ſtately City was built are ſtill to be ſeen; that ſo celebrated a Watch-tower, by the Ancients reckoned among the ſeven Wonders of the World, which by Order of *Ptolemy Philadelphus* was erected by *Soſtratus* of *Gnidus*, ſubſiſts no longer, but is buried under Water, and ſcarce any Traces of it are to be ſeen. Near theſe Ruins there is a Tower built, which ſerves for a Light-houſe to Ships in the Night.

This Work was erected under *Mahometan* Princes, but does not come up by any Means to the Magnificence and Splendor of the old *Pharos*, the firſt Story of which was a vaſt Apartment of white Marble. And over this ſuperb Structure, there was a ſquare Tower of an extraordinary Height, built of the ſame Marble.

Before I tell thee of the Ruins of ancient *Alexandria*, the Buildings of the new City, the Pyramids of *Cairo*, and the Antiquities in this Capital of *Egypt*, I will give thee a general Character

* *Et Campos ubi Troja fuit.* Virg. Æn. lib. iii.

of the Inhabitants of this Country, and in laying open their Manners and Character to the best of my Power, I shall compare them with those of the ancient *Egyptians*. In doing this, I foresee that I shall have an Opportunity to gratify thy Curiosity, and that I shall be able to inform thee of many Particulars, that have escaped the Curiosity of Travellers.

In *Egypt* was our Nation formed; in this Country did it grow and multiply; there it was that the Promises which God made to *Abraham*, began to have their Effect, and in the same Country happened the first Miracles, wrought by the Almighty, to deliver his People from Slavery.

The Origin of the ancient *Egyptians* is altogether unknown to us; their Dynasties include the fabulous History of sixteen or seventeen thousand Years; which is a Foible, or rather a Folly, that all Nations have been, or are still guilty of, more or less. The *Ethiopians* and the *Chinese* claim the Preference as to Antiquity. The *Nazarene* People, who are obliged to fix the Creation of the World very near where the *Hebrews* do, affect to derive their Descent as far as possible from the most ancient People. They cannot go higher than the Deluge; but they endeavoured to invent Fables, deriving their Origin from the Times nearest to it. Some of the ancient Poets and Historians of *France* make their Nation descend in a direct Line from *Astyanax* the Son of *Hector*. The Dynasties of the *Egyptians*, being altogether as fabulous as the pretended Origin of the *Trojans*, it were better to own frankly an Ignorance of the Manner how, and the Time when, *Egypt* was peopled, than to look for Truth in a Number of Fables that have no Appearance of it.

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The *Persians*, *Greeks*, *Romans*, *Arabians*, and *Turks*, have in their Turns subdued the ancient Inhabitants of *Egypt*, and introduced themselves into the Country. The Descendants of the primitive *Egyptians* are at this Day called *Coptes*; these are the true Natives of the Country, but their Number compared to the Foreigners there, is extremely small. The Civil Wars of the *Romans* were the first Cause of the Ruin of *Egypt*. The *Greek Nazarene* Emperors put many of the Inhabitants of the Kingdom to Death, and persecuted many others from an Aversion to the Heresy of *Dioscorus*, the Patriarch of *Alexandria*, whose Doctrine then was, and is still embraced by the *Egyptian* Nation. The *Arabian* and *Mahometan* Princes almost completed the Ruin of the ancient *Egyptians*, so that now the *Coptic* Language is no longer understood by the *Coptes* themselves; the last who knew it having been dead some Years.

The Books and Writings in that Idiom are what we shall never recover; the Knowledge of Hieroglyphics was lost heretofore in the same Manner, and had it not been for the Aid of Printing, the *Greek* perhaps would have had the same Fate in process of Time. The Number of *Turks* and *Jews* increases every Day in *Constantinople*, whereas that of the *Greeks* lessen visibly. For a long Time past the modern *Greek* Language has had nothing in common with the ancient *Greek*, or at least very little. By Degrees all the People in the *Levant* will come to write in the *Turkish* Language, so that the *Greek* Characters will not perhaps be known five hundred Years hence by any but some of the most learned *English*, *French*, *German*, and *Dutch Nazarenes*; and the ancient Inhabitants of *Greece* will have no Occasion for them any more than they

have for the ancient Language, which they have already disused.

Besides the *Coptes*, there are two other Sorts of Inhabitants in *Egypt*, the first of whom are called the *Established Bedouins*, and the latter the *Wandering Bedouins*. The former live in the Villages and Country Houses, and are to be considered as the Peasants of the Country. The *Wandering Bedouins* lead the same Life as the ancient Patriarchs, they live under Tents upon the Milk of their Cattle, and shift their Habitations for the Convenience of Pasture; they always encamp in Places where they can easily come at Water; some sojourn near the Mountains, and others near to Places that are inhabited.

The *Turks* have a very great Regard for the *Wandering Bedouins*; they abandon their Lands to them for Cultivation, that they may have no Quarrel with a People that may do them a great deal of Mischief, and whom it is not in their Power to hurt. They need never be in any Fear of the *Turks*, because they can retire a hundred Leagues into the Deserts, where it is very easy for them to subsist, by their Frugality, and Knowledge of the Wells. They are not incumbered in their March by the Quantity of their Baggage, for the Camels carry their Tents and their Mats made of Rushes; these being all their Furniture, Beds, Palaces, and Temples. These People, dear *Monceca*, are fonder of their rural Life, than the Courtiers are of the Pageantry and Bustle of a Court *. With them the

* Beatus ille, qui, procul negotiis,
Ut prisca Gens Mortalium,
Paterna Rura Bobus exercet suis,
Solutus omni Fœnore;

Neque

the Golden Age is ſtill in being; their Cattle furniſh them with their moſt delicate Diſhes of Meat, and their Cattle provide for their other Occaſions. The Wool of their Sheep ſuffices to clothe them, for they make a Stuff with it, which defends them from the Injuries of the Air. They look upon thoſe to be Madmen, who build immenſe Palaces, and yet think they live in a narrow Compaſs. *Do not Cares and Perplexities*, ſay they, *inhabit in thoſe ſtately Buildings? If Man has no more Content nor Satisfaction in them, than we have under our Tents, why ſhould we be at the Trouble of Building them?*

Men, dear *Monceca*, by buildings Towns have made themſelves Slaves to one another; for they are obliged to grant Titles to private Men, who form Chains by which they themſelves are bound. Thoſe Baſtions, Citadels, and Fortifications, are by length of Time become as hurtful to the People, as they thought them uſeful for a Guard againſt their Enemies: For they with whom theſe Forts were

Neque excitatur Claſſico miles truci,
Neque horret iratum Mare,
Forumque vitat, & ſuperba Civium
Potentiorum Limina.

***Hor. Epod.* lib. Ode ii.**

***Thus Tranſlated by Mr.* CREECH.**

'Happy the Man, beyond Pretence,
'(Such was the State of Innocence)
'That looſe from Care, from Buſineſs free,
'From griping Debts and Uſury,
'Contented in an humble Fate,
'With his own Oxen plows his own Eſtate:
'No early Trumpet breaks his Eaſe,
'He doth not dread the angry Seas:
'He flies the Bar, from Noiſe retreats,
'And ſhuns the Nobles' haughty Seats.

trusted, have by Means thereof attained to absolute Power; and the first Men that lived in Towns were the first Slaves.

The *Bedouins* have no need to assemble their General States for preserving their Liberty; for they have no Disputes; no Civil War; they find Pasture and Water wherever they go; and that is their best Treasure; their Industry, and Frugality furnishing them with every Thing else. They have no Difference about Religion, no wrangling Doctors and Divines. If the most zealous *Jansenists* and *Molinists*, of whom thou hast often made mention in thy Letters, had been born *Bedouins*, they would have passed their Lives without being disturbed by the Rage of opposite Parties, always ready to murder one another. With these happy People, dear *Monceca*, there is no Tent encompassed with Ditches, guarded by Soldiers, and set apart for the Confinement of Prisoners of State. The *Bedouins* never raised Palaces to Revenge, and made it no Crime for their Brethren to think differently from themselves; but they had every one the Liberty always of praying to the Deity in the *Turkish*, *Arabic*, *Persian*, or even the *French* Language, if they had a Fancy for it.

An Enemy, were he ever so potent, would not be able with the Assistance of a Scrap of Paper obtained by the Favour of a *Bedouin* Minister to get an Order for a private Man to quit his Tent, his Family, and his Flock, and to repair to the Confines of *Ethiopia*, there to stay till farther Orders.

A *Bedouin* Mufti does not go with a Guard of Soldiers from one Tent to another, to get a Subscription to the Confession of the *Mahometan* Faith, drawn up in a set Form of Words, wherein all the Virtue of it consists.

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Those People are ignorant of Edicts, and new Regulations for the rising or falling the Value of Money; never does a *Bedouin* go to Bed with a hundred thousand Crowns in his Pocket, and rise not worth a Penny. The most that he loses is a Sheep perhaps, which a Wolf may run away with in the Night. He pays no Tax at coming into the World, nor none at going out.

Counsellors, Attorneys, Sollicitors, the several Degrees of Jurisdiction, subaltern, inferior and sovereign, are unknown to the happy *Bedouins*. A Suit of Law between two Persons never lasts above twenty-four Hours, for the oldest Man of the Tribe gives his Decision of the Matter in Question upon the Spot and without Fees. These People know not how to believe that a Cause should sometimes take up an hundred Years in the *Nazarene* Families; and all the *Turks* in general look upon such Talk as only invented to shew the Slowness of Justice; yet it is true that there are several Differences that are not accomodated in the Course of a Century. A *French* Merchant assured me at *Constantinople*, that he prosecuted a Suit in the Parliament at *Grenoble*, which was depending no less than an hundred and twenty Years.

How ridiculous is this, dear *Monceca*, or rather how avaricious? What, cannot a Controversy be decided betwixt two Men, but it must take up more Time than their Lives? Are not an hundred and twenty Years sufficient to declare whether such an Estate belongs to *Jacob* or to *Isaac*? Happy are the *Bedouins*, who still retaining the first Impressions of Nature, have not thrown a Cloud over their Reason by such ridiculous Customs!

I have often talked with the *Nazarenes* concerning the Length of their Law Suits; they think they came off well enough by returning for Answer, That

though Justice is very slow with them, yet it is good, and given with very great Wisdom. But how now! Does it absolutely require Ages to judge of an Affair prudently? Must one and the same Suit be examined through three or four Generations? and must the Judges from the Father to the Son intail certain Law-Suits upon them, the Fees of which run away with a Part of the Revenue of the Family? In order to judge solidly of a Process, it is necessary to ruin the two Parties intirely, and to consume in Law-Expences more than the Sum in Dispute? It is in vain, dear *Monceca*, for the *Nazarenes* to offer to plead the Equity of their Courts of Justice, as an Excuse for the Defects and Slowness of their Proceedings. Their Painters draw Justice holding a Balance; but it often turns to that Side that has most Money, at least many People complain so. There is not a private Man but trembles when he is sued by a Nobleman who has a powerful Interest. A bad Token this of the Opinion which the People have of the Integrity of their Judges; but the Case is not the same with the wandering *Bedouins*, from the Heads of whose Tribes a Man that has but a hundred Sheep, is sure to have as much Justice as he that has two thousand; and it seldom happens, after such Determination passed, that the Person condemned complains or makes others afraid of submitting to the same Award.

Take Care of thy Health, dear *Monceca*, and may the God of our Fathers prosper thee with Abundance.

LETTER

LETTER LXX.

From AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris, *to* ISAAC ONIS, *a Caraite, formerly a Rabbi, at* Constantinople.

THY Letter dear *Isaac*, has given me very great Pleasure. I find thy Reflexions to be solid and useful, and shall think myself very happy, if thou wilt be so good as to continue to give me light into those Things in *Egypt*, which are in thy Opinion worthy of the Curiosity and Attention of a Philosopher.

The Ruins of *Alexandria*, scattered and buried as they are, still convey a grand Idea of the ancient Splendor of that City. Those Pieces of Marble that are seen there, those Chapiters, as much demolished as they are, offer still something noble to the Imagination; for those stately Ruins represent to the Mind the Grandeur and Magnificence of those Piles of Building, when they were standing and entire.

If *Paris*, and most of the Cities of *France*, should happen to be destroyed, it would be difficult, five hundred Years after it, to discover any Traces of the most pompous Structure. For Want of Marble the Structures that are already decaying, would soon be buried in Oblivion; because Stone only resists the Shocks of Weather when it is joined to other Buildings, but after it is separated from the main Building, it soon loses the Form it had received from the Hand of the Workman. There is not one Marble Pillar in all the public

Edifices at *Paris:* And *Versailles*, where *Lewis* XIV. laid out such immense Sums, does not contain so much Marble, the Statues excepted, as the Palaces of some Senators at *Genoa*. The carved Work of the Front of the *Tuilleries* is already nibbled and damaged by Time; though the Structure is not yet finished.

The Ruins of the Cities in the *Archipelago* have for several Ages engaged the Curiosity of Travellers, yet the *Turks* lessen them every Day, and carry away vast Quantities of their Marble. How much therefore must there have been of it at first? The Mosque of the Sultan *Achmet* was built only of the Stones fetched from the Ruins of *Troy*. The Columns which form the Perystil of that Temple, and which are not less than an hundred and thirty in Number, were found all intire in the Fields of that ancient City. For near two hundred Years the *Turks* made Use of no other Bullets for the Cannon of the *Dardanelles*, than *Corinthian* Chapiters and Columns which they broke to Pieces, and then cut to make them serve that Purpose. What a vast Number of Structures only built of Marble must there have been formerly in *Greece?* How many Triumphal Arches, Porticos, Perystils, Fountains, and Pillars? *Rome* had not so many superb Structures as *Greece*, if we may judge by the Number of Marble Pieces, and the other Works of Architecture that had escaped the Fury of the Times. I own that there must be prodigious Wealth in the *Tyber*, and that to be sure there are more Statues in it's Channel, than there are in *Rome* now; but all these Treasures are concealed from our Sight, and we cannot judge of what we do not see.

About forty Years ago, our Brethren the *Jews* offered twenty Millions to the sovereign Pontiff, to

to get leave of him, to search the *Tyber*, and to turn the Course of it for only six Months, and proposed to examine it for only one League above, and another below that City. It is very certain that in the Space of those two Leagues they would have found ten Times the Value of their Premium. However, said they, as they ran a Risque of losing their twenty Millions, they desired that for their great Ease in that Work, they might be allowed to turn off the *Tyber* in the Summer, which Clause was the very Thing that defeated their Petition. Twenty Millions was a Sum very tempting, and the Matter was debated more than once or twice, but at length it was judged, that the great Heats might draw such Exalations from the drained Channel, as would breed a Pestilence, and therefore their Request was denied. For my Part, dear *Isaac*, I am of Opinion that the Apprehension of Distempers was only a Cloak made Use of to cover the real Reasons of that Refusal. The *Jews* would have sold all the Treasure, the Statutes, the Bronzes, the Medals, and the Columns which they would have found, out of the City, because nobody in it would have been rich enough to have paid down the Money for them which many sovereign Princes and rich private Men abroad would have given. It was the same political Reason that hindered the Removal of the Pictures and Statues from *Rome:* And had it not been for this wise Regulation, that City would have been stripped long ago of abundance of fine Things which the Nobility and Citizens would have sold; and be Degrees Foreigners becoming possessed at Home of what drew them to *Rome*, would have resorted to that City no longer, which would have been a notorious Prejudice to it. This Regulation has been so rigidly adhered to, that the great Dukes

of

of *Tuscany* never could obtain Leave for the Removal of old *Hercules* out of their Palace at *Rome* to their own Dominions.

Lewis XIV. in the Time of the greatest Splendor, made a Purchase at *Rome* of a Part of the Antiques that are in the Gallery of *Versailles*; and the Person commissioned to send them to *France*, was *Poussin* the famous Painter, who was a Subject of his Majesty. The sovereign Pontiff not being able to help it, gave his Consent; but in order to keep Peace with the Populace, and to prevent a Tumult, they were obliged to embark them in the Night-time, when no-body knew any Thing of the Matter. It is true, that if *Lewis* XIV. had pleased, he could have obliged the Magistrates of *Rome* to send them to him themselves, for he was then so much dreaded at *Rome*, that no-body durst refuse it him; but he was for avoiding all Discussions, which, when those they have to deal with do not act with Vigour, the *Romans* spin out to Eternity, so that it requires more Time to settle the least Incident with them, than to conclude a general Peace throughout *Europe*. Impertinence and Chicanery seem to be the Province of the *Nazarene* Priests, but of no People more than the *Jansenists* or *Molinists*, who when they cannot dispute with their Enemies, and gainsay them, pick a Quarrel with their own Brethren and Adherents: Of which the following is a recent Instance.

The Pontiff of *Paris*, of whom I have not yet made any Mention in my Letters, is very much hated by the *Jansenists*, who have aimed to blacken his Reputation by defamatory Libels; but the better Sort of People have not suffered themselves to be prejudiced by these Invectives. The Pontiff is very much of a Gentleman. Before he came to *Paris*

Paris he had governed another Church, where he was universally beloved even by the *Jansenists*. He was raised to the chief Ecclesiastical Dignity in the Kingdom, and fell a Sacrifice to it; for being obliged to stand his ground against all the Efforts of the *Jansenist* Party, he soon regretted the Loss of that Tranquility which he had enjoyed in his old Diocese: However he endeavoured to sweeten their Tempers as much as he could. Being an Enemy to violent and rigorous Measures, he was desirous that an Accommodation might be entered into sincerely: But the Good Man did not very well know the People he had to do with: The *Jansenists* were so enraged against him, that they even reproached him for eating too much; as if his Appetite had been a Crime, and as if a puny Stomach was essential to Righteousness. Finding at length that all he could do would be to no Purpose, he let Things take their Course. Complaint had been made a long Time in his Diocese, that a Book which the *Nazarenes* call a *Breviary*, wanted much to be regulated. It is a Collection of the Psalms of the Royal Prophet, with a Mixture of some Prayers of their own composing. The Pontiff ordered the Men skilled in the *Nazarene* Law to compose a new *Breviary*. While this was doing, all the *Jansenists* murmured and raved sadly against the Book, and those that composed it. The *Molinists*, on the contrary, gave out every where, that the Work, which would soon appear, was excellent. It did appear, and by a merry Accident the *Jansenists* received it with very great Respect, and the *Molinists* declaimed against it with very great Rage; so that they filled *Paris* with their seditious Writings. Two Priests there are * among others,

* *Languet*, the *Curé*, or Parson of St. *Sulpice*; and the Parson of St. *Nicholas de Chardonnetet*.

who have solemnly protested that they will not abandon their old *Breviary*; one of them especially raves and tears at a deadly rate *; he is a religious Coxcomb, who is like enough one Day or other to introduce the Convulsions of the *Jansenists* among the *Molinists*. He says that the new *Breviary* is a Book full of dangerous Errors; that it deserves to be burnt; that his Pontiff had in all Appearance gorged too much when he appoved it; and that he appeals from the *Afternoon* Pontiff to the *Morning* Pontiff. The Parliament, which does not think his Arguments very excellent, maintains that the *Breviary* is right and good, and that as such it ought to be received. That sovereign Court has since condemned a certain Writing, which was shrewdly suspected to be the Composition of some fanatical Priest, to be torn and burnt by the common Hangman. Mean Time the Affair of the *Breviary* is not yet ended; the angry *Molinists* say it is good for nothing, and that it is impossible for an Arret of Parliament to make bad Merchandize good. They compare this Book to rusty Bacon, which is enough to spoil the best Sauce; consequently, say they, the Book is enough to poison the soundest Mind. From whence the *Nazarenes* fetched this Comparison, I know not; for it is perfectly in the *Hebrew* Taste, and what would have been very significant in the Mouth of a *Jew*, considering the Aversion we naturally have to the Hog, an unclean Animal, the Flesh of which is forbid us by our Holy Law.

There is nothing now stirring at *Paris* but the Dispute about this *Breviary*. I will take care to inform thee in what Manner it ends; it is probable that the Priests will be obliged to submit, for the secular Judges have a Way to punish them, which

* The Parson of St. *Sulpice*.

cuts

cuts them to the very Heart, namely, by ſtripping them of their Revenues; the Clergy being ſo ſelfiſh that this is the only Way to bring them to the Point where you would have them.

As to the Perſon who has declared in the moſt public Manner againſt the Introduction of this new Book, they ſay of him in particular, that he makes his Money his God. He is building a magnificent Temple, but they ſay, it is worth more to him than to the Workmen whom he employs. Under the ſpecious Pretence of a Collection towards the Charges of the Building, and Decoration of it, he receives Money from all Hands. It is all the ſame Thing to him who has no Manner of Exception to the Money, which is ſtill Money, come from whomſoever it will. I am poſitive he would not think it a Trouble to receive a Profit from the common Whores at *Paris*, if he was to be permitted to lay a Tax upon their Trade. He would build his Temple, as that famous *Ægyptian* Courtezan built one of the Pyramids of *Ægypt*, out of the Profits ſhe got by the Sparks to whom ſhe granted her Favours.

Perhaps, dear *Iſaac*, thou wilt be aſtoniſhed at the Obſtinacy of this Clergyman, in endeavouring to diſtinguiſh himſelf thus ſingly from all his Brethren. He hopes by his Rebellion to make his Court to the ſovereign Pontiff. It is by theſe bold Strokes that a private Man makes himſelf known, and renders his Name conſiderable among the Madmen of the Party that he has embraced: And the Court of *Rome*, for which no body ever does any Service in vain, is ſure, ſooner or later, to reward ſuch blind Zeal. Thus the moſt criminal Undertakings are often the beſt recompenſed. In all Places, and eſpecially amongſt the Clergy, there are *Eroſtratus*'s of this modern Sort, who, to get a

Name,

Name, set every Thing in a Flame, and raise sudden Hurricanes in Times of the greatest Calm.

Some Years ago, a Pontiff that was an outragious *Molinist* *, published a Paper in Violation of the Regard that he owed to the King his Master, and to the Welfare of his Country; which Proceeding of his was supposed to have been owing to the Instigation of the *Jesuits*, though they had no Share in it. The Pontiff having heard it, declared publicly, that the *Jesuits* were so far from having a hand in the Performance which he had published, that they did what they could to hinder it, and of this I make no Doubt. The *Jesuits* though they are the most rigid *Molinists*, yet they are the most politic; The silly Things done by those who are attached to them, are a very great Discredit to them; and if they could always restrain their Tempers, the subaltern *Molinists* would not commit many Follies that they are guilty of. But let the General Officers of an Army have ever so much Foresight, it is impossible for them to hinder the Folly of a Soldier, a Sutler, or the Foot-Soldier's Post-Boy.

Farewell, dear *Isaac*; and may the God of our Fathers grant thee Riches in Abundance.

* The Archbishop of *Arles*.

LETTER

LETTER LXXI.

From AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris, *to* ISAAC ONIS, *a Caraite, lately a Rabbi, at* Constantinople.

THE News from *Corsica*, dear *Isaac*, differs very much, and People begin to doubt whether the Project of the pretended King *Theodore* will succeed; Money fails him, and the Succours that he had promised are not arrived. A third Party is formed in the Island, and the *Genoese* hope to see their Affairs soon retrieved, or at least they give out so. I must tell thee plainly, dear *Monceca*, that after having reasoned a long Time upon the Transactions in *Corsica*, I frankly own, that I know not what to make of it. I talk with Politicians here every Day, who are mighty Speculators, and lay open the whole Mystery of this Adventure, with as much Assurance as if they were let into the most secret Particulars of it. They pretend to know the famous Magician that protects this Knight-Errant; they know from whence came the Assistance he has had hitherto; and they tell you the Particulars of what he is to expect. But after having heard them for a good while, when one comes to reflect upon what they have said, it is plain that it is all meer Guess-work, and that it cannot stand the Test of Examination.

If one considers *Theodore* in the Light of a Fortune-hunter, if we believe what the *Genoese* say of him, his Arrival in *Corsica* has something as extraordinary in it as the prodigious Rise of *Tamerlane*, who,

who, as some *Arabian* Authors say, was only the Son of a Shepherd; and it it really not near so surprising for a private Centinel of the *Tartars*, to become Master and Head of his Country, as it is to see a private Man, one of the vulgar Rank, get himself to be declared King in the Centre of *Europe*, and in Sight too of a great many Princes, jealous of the Grandeur and Majesty of their Rank, which would be depreciated, if a notorious Fortune-hunter should become their Equal. For, in short, if by chance the *Genoese* should be entirely drove out of the Island of *Corsica*, and *Theodore* should be recognized by all the Inhabitants for their sovereign Lord and Master, I would know what the sovereign Powers of *Europe* would do in that Case? Could such Monarchs as the Emperor and the King of *France*, find in their Hearts ever to recognize for a lawful Sovereign, a King crowned by a Rebellion formed by Wickedness, and who before he became a Sovereign did, as they say, more than once dishonour the Character of a Gentleman? I do not believe there is any body silly enough to imagine, that those Princes would behave in that Manner. But, on the other Hand, *Theodore* would have Dominions, Subjects, Ships, Harbours, Towns, &c. and when any Quarrel happens with him, as it is impossible but there must, upon what Foot should he be treated with? *France* would even be forced to it by the Situation of *Corsica*; for there are few Ships that set out from *Marseilles* for the *Levant*, but what anchor either going or coming upon the Coasts of *Corsica*.

Several Persons resolve these Difficulties, by saying, that as soon as *Theodore* is Master and peaceable Possessor of his Country, another Power would expel him out of it. But I ask, whether such Reasoning is consistent with good Policy? I think it

it is altogether the Reverse of it; and that unless all those Difficulties between the *European* Powers are prevented, before they go about to expel *Theodore*, the Power that should undertake it would find several Princes ready to oppose him. But, as some People say, every Thing is already settled and concluded, and they all know what they have to trust to: This is what I shall inquire into hereafter, but in the mean Time I think this Opinion liable to a world of Objections. I really consider (supposing that *Theodore* acts only upon his own Bottom) what Obstacles that Power would meet with, who should offer to drive him out of *Corsica*, if he was once in peaceable Possession of it. Suppose *Spain* should be that Power, it would be the Interest of *France* strenuously to oppose that Nation's having a Country with Towns and Harbours which entirely block up those of *Marseilles*, *Toulon*, and *Antibes*: For in case the *Spaniards* were to have a War with *France*, they would, with two Frigates of twenty Guns each, absolutely interrupt the Trade to the *Levant*. In a Storm, the Merchant-Ships would be obliged to go for Shelter to very distant Ports, and sometimes would be able to find none, especially if the Wind should hinder them from making the Coast of *Italy*. The Island of *Corsica*, in the Hands of so formidable a Power as the *Spaniards*, would become as pernicious to the Trade of *Marseilles*, as the *French* in the Time of War would be troublesome to the *Catalans*, if they should ever be Masters of the Island of *Majorca*. Do but cast thy Eye, dear *Isaac*, upon a Map, and thou wilt be convinced thyself of the Truth of my Opinion.

France would not be the only Power obliged in Interest to hinder the *Spaniards* from having the Island of *Corsica*. Undoubtedly the King of *Sardinia*

dinia would be very loth to consent to it; *Nice*, *Villa-Franca*, and his other Maritime Towns being already so much pent up and cramped by *France*, that I do not believe he would care to have another Neighbour so incommodious. Some Politicians are of Opinion, that the *European* Powers would freely consent that the King of *Sardinia* should be Master of the Island of *Corsica*. But *France* has the same Reason to oppose the *Piedmontese* as to oppose the *Spaniards*; because, though the former are not near so powerful as the latter, they might become very troublesome to *France* whenever they should unite with other Powers against her. What would become of *Toulon* and all *Provence*, if the *English* and *Dutch* had it in their Power to form Magazines, and to have a Number of Towns and Sea-ports but forty Leagues from *Provence*, and to be able to come in twenty-four Hours Time to anchor there with a Squadron whenever they pleased.

If it be almost as much the Interest of *France* as of *Spain*, to see the *English* dispossessed of *Port Mahon*, how much more is she obliged in Interest, not to let a formidable Power establish itself in those Ports that blocks up all her Harbours in the *Mediterranean*? Some People think that she would not be very uneasy, if those Ports were in the Hands of the King of *Naples* and *Sicily*, but this Argument is so weak that it confutes itself. The Union of the Courts of *Madrid* and *Naples* is so strict, their Interests are so united, that the same Reasons which oppose the *Spaniards* oppose the *Neapolitans*. Besides, all Men are mortal, Sovereigns themselves being not exempted by the Deity from the Laws of Death. If the Prince of *Asturias*, who has no Children, should happen to die, are not those Ports in the Hands of *Spain*, and by consequence of a formidable

midable Power? But some will say, who knows whether by the secret Articles of the very Treaties that would render the *Neapolitans* Masters of the Country, they would not be obliged to abandon it to another Prince, the very Moment that their Sovereign should become King of *Spain?* To this I answer, That an able Politician will never rely upon the Faith of Restitutions. The Councils of Princes are as fruitful in Excuses as the Society of *Jesuits* is; they never want plausable Pretences, and they make Use of the Privilege of the Direction of the Intention. The *English* are lately become very *Jesuits* upon this Head; and I believe they have been obliged to those Reverend Fathers for several Arguments, with Regard to the Article of *Gibraltar* and *Port Mahon*. And what might not the *Spaniards* do, who are prone by Nature to follow the Direction of the *Jesuits?*

These, dear *Isaac*, are the Reasons which incline me to suspect that *Theodore* does not act upon his own Bottom, but is directed by a *Primum Mobile*. His want of Money, and of a sufficient Number of Forces; the Slowness with which he goes on, and his not having yet performed a single Action that can be decisive; all this together confirms me in my Opinion.

But, on the other Hand, when I come to consider that the Baron *de Newhoff* was a Slave two Years ago, that he was sick in an Hospital three Years ago, that he has spent his Patrimony long since; and when I see him arrived in *Corsica* with Chests full of Gold Coin, and with eight Brass Cannon, the least of which cost above two thousand Crowns, I know not what to think of it. Two or three hundred thousand Livres is not a Sum to be borrowed upon slender Hopes, which even appear ridiculous to any

any that will but examine them. How then could the Baron *de Newhoff* compass those Supplies with which he has supplied the *Corsicans?* If he had them not from private Hands, he must needs have had them from some sovereign Power; and if it is some Sovereign that assists, supports, and protects him, why does he abandon him to Necessity? Why does he suffer him to want Money, and expose him to the Hazard of employing the first Sums he gave him to no Purpose?

One is perfectly lost and bewildered in the Attempt to dive to the Bottom of these Reflexions. There are Politicians who think it easy to unfold all these Secrets. As for my Part, I own sincerely, that I can comprehend but little, if any Thing, of the Matter: Perhaps they who fancy they know the Mystery, are as ignorant of it as I am; but they are not so candid, and would fain pass their Conjectures upon the World for real Facts. This is too much the Foible of all Politicians; nothing puts them to a Stand, and they readily find Reasons to solve the greatest Difficulties. They penetrate into the very Cabinets of Princes; they know the most secret Thing that passes there, and they foretel the End of a War before it is scarce begun. In fine, they regulate all the Courts of *Europe*; but unhappily for themselves and their Predictions, they are as much mistaken as the Makers of Almanacs.

It must be Time, dear *Isaac*, that will clear up that confused Chaos of Ideas, which Mankind forms upon the Baron *de Newhoff*'s Undertaking. Mean while let us suspend our Judgment. There are ten or twelve People in *Europe* that know the Secret of this Affair; and to be sure it is an infinite Pleasure to them, to hear what other Folks say. We shall one Day have the same Advantage as

as they have now; and when the Intricacy is cleared up, the vain Conjectures which we form at present will be an Amusement to us in our Turn.

As soon as I learn any Thing new, I will let thee know it by a Letter, and shall take Care to inform myself exactly of what may serve for our Instruction. After all, they give out here that the said Lord *Theodore* treats his new Subjects with very great Rigour, those especially whom he suspects to be against him. A bare Suspicion is with him such a Crime, that nothing but Death can attone for it. He has caused four of the chief Men that were against him to be shot to Death, but I think he would have done much better to pardon them; for such an Instance of his Generosity would have won him many more Hearts, than a slavish Fear will ever retain in Respect and Submission.

I cannot but think that the Blood which is spilt upon Scaffolds in Civil Wars, produces the same Effect as that of the Primitive *Nazarenes*, which the Pagan Emperors shed with so much Rage. The more of them that were put to Death, the more the Number of them increased. The very same Thing happens in Civil Wars; the Spirit of Party is heated by Murder and Slaughter, and the Death of one Person determines a hundred to espouse his Party. The Murderer is sure to be hated, and he that dies will infallibly be pitied. The Death of the famous Admiral *de Coligni*, and of the other Protestants, only served to increase the Number of *Henry* IV's Adherents. The Losses which the Catholic Cantons sustained in their last War, united them more than ever together. Since the entire Suppression of the Religion of the *Nazarene* Papists in *Ireland*, the Number of the *Nazarenes* of that Faith is rather increased there than

diminished. The Deposing of the Pontiff of the City of *Senès*, in the Council of *Ambrun* has very much augmented the Number of *Jansenists* in *France*. People are much sooner reclaimed by Lenity, than by violent and bloody Methods. *Philip* II's Character for Cruelty, gave the first Blow to the *Spanish* Monarchy, and made him lose those Countries that now form the Republic of *Holland*.

Take Care of thy Health, dear *Isaac*, and may the God of our Fathers give thee an abundant Measure of Prosperity.

LETTER LXXII.

From JACOB BRITO, *at* Lausanne *in* Switzerland, *to* AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris.

BEFORE I could pursue my Rout through *Lyons* and *Languedoc*, in order to make the best of my Way to *Lisbon*, I was obliged to go and pass a few Days at *Lausanne*. I have received Passports for six Months from the Courts of *Spain* and *Portugal*, so that I can now do all my Business quietly, without being terrified by the Priests or the Inquisition. *Samuel Pinaro* has procured a Commission for me to be Agent extraordinary to the Republic of *Genoa*, while I stay at *Lisbon*, which Title gives me a Character that puts me out of all Manner of Danger; I doubt not but to discover a great many Things in the Voyage I purpose to make, which may be the Foundation of some Philisophical Reflexions, and I will

I will write to thee from *Spain*, as constantly as I have done from *Italy*.

I have few Things to acquaint thee of at present. *Lausanne* is a very pretty Town, being the Capital of the *Pays de Vaux*, in the Canton of *Bern*. The People here live much more after the *French* Fashion than they do in the other Towns, yet in general they partake of the Manners and Customs of their Brethren, and the Produce of the Country is just the same as that of the other Cantons. The Wine here is very good, and their Lake and Rivers abound with all Manner of Fish; nor is there any Want of Fowl and all other Necessaries of Life. In this Climate, Nature furnishes the Inhabitants with every Thing that is for their Use, and is only sparing in the Things that introduce Luxury, and encourage Debauchery.

The *Switzers* are inured to all the Hardships of Hunger and Thirst, Cold and Heat; they live very cheap, Milk and Cheese being their principal Food*. Cooks are of no Use with them, or have very little Employment; they being ignorant of the Art of mixing Poisons that are pernicious to Health and long Life, under the Name of Nice Ragoûts, and savory Dishes. Their Houses are but indifferent, and their Furniture is as plain as that of the primitive Times: Their Apparel which is made for their Use, and not to dazzle the Eyes of the Spectators, is proportioned to the Rest; but so many Virtues are obscured by one considerable Fault; for they are most abominable Drunkards. They sometimes spend Days and Nights in continual Debauchery, and there is no Hopes of getting a Place in their Hearts, but by a Glass in the

* This must chiefly be understood of their Mountaineers and Peasants.

Hand; Wine being with them the Cement of Friendſhip. In *Switzerland* the greateſt Drinker is reckoned the beſt Man, and he that can carry off his ſix or ſeven Bottles of Wine, is as much courted at their Entertainments, as a Poet or a facetious Author is in *France*, at their Parties of Pleaſure. If *Chapelle* * and St. *Evremond* had lived in *Switzerland*, they would have paſt for a Couple of pitiful Fellows, not worthy to be admitted into good Company.

Whatſoever Pleaſure the *Switzers* take in drinking, yet as ſoon as their Debaucheries are over, they go to their Buſineſs and double their Induſtry and Diligence to retrieve their Expences. *They work to drink*, ſays a modern Author, *and they drink the better to work.* Their Inclination to Wine does not hinder them from being prudent and circumſpect in Affairs public and private; ſo that to be ſure the Fumes of the Wine do not get up into their Brains ſo much as they do into thoſe of other People; for there is no Treaty, Agreement, Leaſe, or Contract made without the Bottle in Hand, to wet the Bargain with the bewitching Liquor. Nor are their Politics the worſe for their tippling, for after having drank all Day long, a *Swiſs* knows perfectly well what is for the Benefit and Happineſs of his Country. This is a Sort of Miracle, but it is ſo plain a Caſe that it's Reality cannot be doubted, the Cantons having maintained their Liberty for ſo many Ages againſt ſeveral Princes, that would fain have ſubdued them. It is to their Union that they owe their Preſervation, and the Eſteem they have acquired all over *Europe*, in which there

* Yet the Author of the Life of *Moliere* repreſents him at leaſt as an agreeable Debauchee, if not a very Drunkard.

are

are no Princes but what are very glad to be their Allies.

The *Switzers* are got into a Method of having a great Number of well disciplined and experienced Soldiers, that cost them nothing; they send their Youth to serve in foreign Countries; a great many sovereign Princes have *Swiss* Regiments in their Pay, which are constantly recruited by Men that the Cantons give leave for raising in their own Country. But as fast as the young Fellows list and go out of their Country for a certain Time, they who preceded them obtain their Dismission, and return to their own Country, perfectly bred up and trained in the Art of War. Besides the Soldiers that are formed out of *Switzerland*, they take great Care to make all the Citizens and Tradesmen perform military Exercise on particul r Days of the Year; and the very Peasants themselves are not exempt from this Service, who after having worked certain Days of the Week for themselves, employ the Rest for the public Good and Safety of the Country.

Though these Precautions are very well judged, yet the Cantons have little to fear from the Invasions of Foreigners; the inaccessible Mountains of the *Alps* serve them for Ramparts, and there is not a Prince in *Europe*, that, be it either from Fear or from Interest, durst attack them: For were we after an expensive War to subdue them, what he would get by it in fifty Years Time, would not countervail the Expence of one single Campaign. If the *Switzers* are ever in Danger of being destroyed, it can be only by themselves; for as long as they continue united, they will subsist as they have done hitherto; but if ever they are divided among themselves, if Hatred, Discord, and Envy, get Room in their Hearts, they will themselves do that

that in a little Time, which was out of the Power of all *Europe*.

Some Years ago the Popish and Protestant Cantons had a cruel War; the Division was occasioned by a Monk called the Abbot of *St. Gall*; for in all the Dominions of the *Nazarenes*, it seems that always Disputes and Dissension are owing to the turbulent Spirit of the Monks and Priests. This Abbot put himself at the Head of the Popish Cantons, and like another *Joshua*, he said he was resolved to extirpate all the Enemies of God's People; which was the Name that he gave to the *Swiss* Protestants. For this End he had given to every Soldier Billets, containing Lists of the Men that each of them was to murder. One was obliged to cut the Throats of five, another of six, another of seven, and every one more or less, in short, according as the Abbot judged that the Soldier whom he commissioned for that Purpose, had more or less Strength and Courage. He drew up his Army, and before the Battle began, he promised a Place in Heaven to those who died in the Field, and a great many other Indulgencies on the Part of the sovereign Pontiff, to those that should perform the Orders of the Ticket. After this he retired prudently to sleep in a whole Skin, and left it to his Officers to take Care of the Rest. But Things did not answer his Expectation by a great deal; for his Army was intirely defeated, the murdering Tickets had no Effects, and this modern *Joshua* was so far from praying to the Deity to stop the Course of the Sun, to give him Time for the complete Overthrow of his Enemies, that he prayed to it earnestly to bring on Night and Darkness, in order to save him and the Rest of his Party from the Fury and Revenge of the *Nazarene* Protestants.

After

After the Battle the *Swiss* Papists were sensible of the Folly they had been guilty of; they were convinced how ruinous it would be for them to carry on a War which had proved so fatal to them in the Beginning, and therefore proposed a Peace to their Enemies; who, fond to shake Hands again with their Brethren, whom Discord had torn from them, readily consented to an Accomodation that pacified all *Switzerland*, and settled it's Liberty on such a Basis that it cannot be robbed of it while it continued united. This is a Truth of which all the Cantons, both Popish and Protestant, are fully convinced, and consequently they endeavour always to live in Peace and Unity. The Abbot of *St. Gall* now and then makes fresh Attempts to embroil Affairs again, and to foment new Disputes; but the *Swiss* Papists know better Things, having paid so dear for their Experience, and the Protestants had rather submit and bear with some Things patiently, than plunge their Country again in a Civil War.

Some Time after the Reformation was introduced, the Difference of Opinions making a very great Noise, and the Magistrates fearing that such jarring Sentiments might produce some popular Tumult and Sedition, they resolved unanimously that in those Cantons where there were more Papists than Protestants, every one should hereafter adhere to the Interest of the sovereign Pontiff, and that in those where the Number of his Adherents was less than that of his Adversaries, they should intirely break off Communion with him. This was done with as much Ease as it was proposed; all was quiet, and every one lived at his own House in Peace. The acting with so much Prudence and good Sense does not denote an Inclination to Quarrel and Contention. The *Switzers* are the only

People capable of entering into Measures where there is such a Mixture of Frankness and Candor; nor do they boast of being great Philosophers. I do not believe that there were ever many Authors in their Country of any great Reputation; for with them a Poet is as great a Wonder, as an Elephant is at *Paris*; and in general they have more Vessels of Wine in their Vaults, than Volumes in their Libraries. It may be said of the *Switzers*, that they have a great Share of good Sense, but that their Neighbours have all the Wit*.

I have

* The Marquis *d'Argens* having been reflected on, in a Paragraph foisted into the *Bibliotheque Germanique*, Tom. XL. (unknown to the learned Author M. *de Beaufobre*) as if he had asserted, that there are no truly learned Men it *Switzerland*, thought it necessary in this Place to make *Aaron Monceca*'s Apology, as follows, *viz.*

'He was very well persuaded of the contrary; but 'he spoke of the *Switzers* in the general. His Ex'pressions, taken in their strict Sense, can only be un'derstood to mean, that the Men of Learning are more 'scarce in *Switzerland* than in *France* and *England*. 'Really such as Thought that *Aaron Monceca* meant 'to disparage the *Switzers* and to extol the *French*, 'have quite mistaken his Sense; for he grants so'lid Treasure to the former, and nothing but Tin'sel to the latter. Are there any Talents, any Qua'lities which a true Philosopher values like Wisdom 'and fair Argument? Can Wit, ever so sparkling, be 'put in Comparison with good Sense? I have read 'over this Letter three Times successively with a firm 'Resolution to strike out every Thing that I could 'think might give Occasion for the Murmurs of cer'tain People; and I could find nothing in it, but what 'I have heard declared a hundred Times by two hundred '*Swiss* Officers, or Merchants, who had a great Share 'both of Wit and Good Sense, and who judging of

'Things

I have read a Book which is reckoned a Masterpiece in this Country; it is intitled, *Letters concerning the* French *and the* English; *by a* Swiss. This Work has had a good Vent in foreign Parts, but to be plain with thee, it is not worth much; for the Author affects to be witty, and to say pretty Things, which is his Foible, while he embroils himself with a Number of Divisions and Subdivisions. *Le Beau*, says he, *n'est pas toujours Bon; mais, le Bon doit être Beau. Les François n'ont que le Beau: Leur Beau ne vaut donc pas le Bon*; i. e. That which is fair to the Eye, is not always good; but that which is good, must be fair. The *French* have only the Fair, but their Fair is not equivalent to the Good. Now the whole Tendency of this Balderdash, this ringing of the Changes upon the Words *Bon* and *Beau*, and *Beau* which is not *Bon*, is to prove that *Boileau*, and some other Authors of the first Class, are mean Geniuses, and hardly worth reading. He thinks the *English* Comedies scarce worthy the Esteem of good Judges; though as to the *Belles Lettres*, the *English* have succeeded best, and have produced several excellent Pieces. In fine, dear *Monceca*, notwithstanding so many People have approved of this Book, I think it a bad one, writ in a bombastic obscure Stile, conveying no lively Idea to the Imagination, false in it's Criticisms, and incorrect in it's Opinions.

'Things without Prejudice, could not believe that the 'blaming of the Faults of a Nation in general, was 'determining the Merit of every private Man in particular. I repeat it again; Let this Letter be read 'with a Philosophical Eye, and then it will appear 'whether I intended to vilify one of the most considerable Nations in *Europe*.

I would not venture to say so much in this Country as I now write to thee, for the *Switzers* are very much prepossessed in Favour of this Work, and almost as fond of it as they are of the Liberty of the Citizens, which is their continual Topic. But I must tell thee, that this Liberty about which they make so much Noise, extends only to People of some Rank, for the Vulgar are in more Subjection here that in any other State. Every Bailiff in this Country is a petty Sovereign, who, as long as his Employment holds, thinks of nothing but how to make the most of it: So that the People often groan under the Government of some of the Bailiffs, whom they love just as much as they deserve, and no more.

All Countries, dear *Monceca*, have their Good and their Bad; and if we take a Survey of the several Forms of Government, it will appear, that, bating a few Things, they are much like one another: I mean the *European* Nations only, out of which I except those, where the Inquisition exercises it's Fury.

Fare thee well, dear *Monceca*, and live content and happy.

LETTER

LETTER LXXIII.

From AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris, *to* ISAAC ONIS, *a Caraite, late a Rabbi, at* Constantinople.

THEY tell a Piece of News here, as diverting as it is extraordinary; 'They affirm that the 'new King of *Corsica* has wrote to the Wife of 'the Steward of the Archduchess *Mary Magdalen*, 'to acquaint her that he had been elected King 'of *Corsica*, and to desire her to procure the ne-'cessary Passports for a Minister whom he intend-'ed to send to the Court of *Vienna*.' Whether this News be true, I know not; but I do not believe that it is possible for Impertinence and Stupidity to be carried to a greater Height than they are by this notable King *Theodore*. Where is that Mortal who can be a greater Fool than he who fancies that a Prince, such as the Emperor, would vouchsafe to receive an Envoy or an Ambassador from Rebels that rather deserve his Indignation than Protection, because they abused his Goodness; and in a few Months after he had procured their Pardon from the *Genoese*, rebelled again; and only made Use of the Emperor's Kindness, to favour the new Crimes which they were contriving.

But after all, admitting, dear *Isaac*, that the *Corsicans* had just Reasons for their Rebellion, and that the Tyranny of the *Genoese* had forced them to take up Arms, can one so much as harbour a Thought that the Court of *Vienna* would receive

the pretended Envoys of a Fortune-hunter, and a Parcel of wretched Mountaineers, to the Prejudice of a Republic which it had always protected. It would be a Slur on the Majesty of the Imperial Throne, if it afforded shelter to People of that Rank. Rebels are always odious to Princes, unless they get by their Crimes; and it may be well said, that though they love the Treason when they find their Account in it, yet they hate the Traitor. They are afraid lest such Monsters should rise in their Dominions, as they find in those of their Enemies; and if they sometimes reward the Crime with one Hand, they seek a Pretence to punish the Criminal with the other. The *Spaniards* had a vast Contempt for the *French*, who betraying their Country, abandoned their lawful Sovereign: They made Use of them as Tools to their Designs, but they were cautious of trusting them with Places of Importance; they were more cunning Politicians, than to be ignorant that they who could disobey their lawful Sovereign, might with much more Reason betray those to whom they are only attached by Crimes.

If, dear *Isaac*, we observe the Men who are taxed with just Reason for the Violation of their Faith and their Oaths, we shall find that they never stopped at the first Perjury, but went on from one Step to another, till Treason became their common Practice. They have actually reduced this Crime into an Art and a Science, and have covered their Knavery with the Name of *State Policy*. Fatal Stupidity! which, under the Veil of an affected Precaution, conceals Fraud, Perjury, and Dissimulation!

Let the perfidious Talent of craftily abusing Mens' Honesty be ever so noxious to Society, yet we see that many People, who were weak or blinded

blinded by Prejudices, have beſtowed great Praiſe upon Men that deſerved nothing but to be bore down with Contempt for their Perjuries. They who have commended *Sylla*, *Cæſar*, *Mark Anthony*, and ſeveral other Imitators of their Rapacity, approve the Conduct of great Rogues, and cenſure that of little ones; as if it was a greater Crime for a Man to ſteal an Ox, or a Load of Bread-Corn, than to betray his Country.

Let People ſay what they will in Praiſe of the Valour, Courage, Reſolution, Prudence, *&c.* of thoſe to whoſe Rebellion their Country's Ruin has been owing, I no more admire thoſe Virtues in them, than I do the Reſolution of a Highway-Man and a Murderer, or his Foreſight in the Snares which he lays for Travellers.

It is not in the Subjects only that I require Honeſty, but I expect to ſee it likewiſe in Princes. It is in vain to object that their Condition requires Diſſimulation: There is a great Difference between Diſhoneſty and the wiſe and prudent Manner of governing. What Monarch did ever govern his Dominions better than *Lewis* XII. the Father of his People? Where was there a Man of more Candour and Honeſty? The Frankneſs and Sincerity of *Henry* IV. defeated all the vain Schemes of the *Spaniſh* Politicians.

They who fancy that a Prince is no farther great than he is crafty, are guilty of a wretched Miſtake. There is a great Difference between Wiſdom and Knavery; and though in this corrupt Age they are called by the ſame Name, yet the wiſe Man eaſily diſtinguiſhes them. A King, it is true, is not obliged to diſcover his Deſigns to his Enemies; nay he ought to take Care to conceal them from them; but then he ought not by vain Promiſes, by the Lure of a feigned Reconciliation.

ciliation, and under the Veil of a disguised Friendship, to tempt them into the Snares he lays for their Destruction. A great Soul, in whatever Station, always takes Virtue for it's Guide. A Crime is still a Crime, and nothing can diminish from it's Enormity: He who lies, offends Heaven, and offends himself. A Lie has something in it so odious that it is a Shock to the Character of a Gentleman, whatsoever can be said to mitigate it. The very Nations which the *Greeks* treated as Barbarians *, had nevertheless an Abhorence of Lies and Fraud. *Herodotus* † does them this Justice. The *Persians, says he*, have an infinite Contempt for those who falsify their Word; and they train their Children from five to twenty-five Years old in nothing but to draw the Bow, to ride on Horseback, and to speak the Truth.

How many Misfortunes, dear *Isaac*, would never have happened in the World, if Men were Slaves to their Oaths, and kept their Promises inviolably! How would Peace and Tranquility flourish in it! Kings would always be sure of loyal Subjects, and such as are true to the Allegiance they have sworn to them. On the other Hand, those Sovereigns who are careful to perform the Conditions they promised to observe at their Accession to their Thrones, would become the Fathers of a People easy to obey, and, at the same Time, to be submissive only to Justice and Equity.

May all those perish, dear *Isaac*, who are for excusing Monarchs from that which is the fittest Qualification to establish them on their Thrones. By the inculcating of that pernicious Maxim to

* The *Persians*, &c.

† History of *Herodotus*, lib. i. pag. 69. translated by *du Ryer*.

them

them, that they might dispense with the Performance of their Engagements, they have made them prove dangerous Examples to their Subjects; and it is this detestable Principle that has been the Source of all the intestine Wars that have so long distracted most of the Kingdoms of *Europe*. For the exorbitant Power with which Flatterers have aimed to compliment Kings, has often occasioned the Ruin of themselves and their Dominions. Happy is that Prince, dear *Isaac*, who in the Midst of the Pomp and Splendour of his Court, preserves a Heart incapable of Fraud and Treachery, and who is so in love with Honesty, that he protects it, and preaches it to his Subjects by his own Example. He is the Darling of the People his Cotemporaries, and the Admiration of Posterity. They who are trusted with the Education of Princes, cannot sufficiently inspire them with Candour and Sincerity, since from hence all Virtues are derived. A famous *Nazarene* Pontiff *, who formed the Infancy of a great Prince †, wrote a Book for the Instruction of Kings ‡, that was worthy of being put into such a Case of Gold, as *Alexander* kept *Homer*'s Works in. He marked out Lessons for all sovereign Princes, and taught them the Art of reigning over Hearts, and of being more absolute by Virtue and by Justice, than by all the refined Policy of the *Italians*. Of this Nation there have been some Authors whose dangerous Works have been looked upon as Master-pieces. *Machiavel*, among others, has distinguished himself by his political Writings. If I were a Sovereign, I would order all those Writings of his to be burnt, that

* Archbishop of *Cambray*. † Duke of *Burgundy*.
‡ Adventures of *Telemachus*.

subject

ſubject Virtue to a Precaution, to which they teach that every Thing ſhould be ſacrificed. It is ridiculous to attempt to juſtify the Uſe of thoſe Books, by aſſerting that Politics are a Talent abſolutely neceſſary for Sovereigns. I have already ſhewn that true Wiſdom has no need of Rules whereby to learn how to ſhake off the Yoke of Virtue and Honour. A King may vanquiſh his Enemies by his Wiſdom, without having Recourſe to Fraud and Perjury; he may keep his Subjects in their Duty, without reducing them to Slavery. *There is no Neceſſity*, ſays a famous *Nazarene* Author, *of either Art or Learning for the Exerciſe of Tyranny*. To what Purpoſe then are all the Books of extravagant Politics, eſpecially as there are Works in being*, which teach us to do by Virtue every Thing that can be done by Artifice.

Theſe, dear *Iſaac*, are my Sentiments of that Policy ſo much boaſted of by the *Italians*; and perhaps if the *Genoeſe* had conformed to my Notions, and inſtead of attempting to reduce the *Corſicans* to their lamentable Condition, and thereby to drive them to a Situation in which they could not ſtir, if they had treated them in a more gentle Manner, they would have played a much better Game. Be it as it will, they are now very much embaraſſed, and the Lord *Theodore* gives them a vaſt deal of Uneaſineſs. He has actually blocked up ſome of the Towns of the Iſland; he is a Maſter of the open Country, and may perhaps, in a little Time, undertake ſomething conſiderable. We are aſſured that three Ships have been ſeen on the Coaſt of *Corſica* without any Flag, and that they are laden with Ammunition. It is ſaid they are Succours which are arrived very fortunately for

* *Telemachus.*

Lord

Lord *Theodore*. If it be so, from whence did those Ships come? Has *Merlin* the Inchanter sent them from the fortunate Island? No body knows any thing of the Matter. But some People pretend that they came from the Road of *Barcelona*. If that be the Case, the Comedy is like to draw to a Conclusion, and we shall soon see the Commencement of the fifth Act. Though the unravelling of this Piece is very pleasant, I do not believe that the *Genoese* half like it. Nevertheless we must wait a little while longer, before we can advance any Thing that has the Appearance of Truth: If it be certain that some Vessels are arrived with Succours to King *Theodore*, the Place from whence they sailed will be a very great Guide to the Conjectures that may be made. But if this be unknown, People can only guess in the Dark: Notwithstanding what some Politicians say, who talk of this Affair as if King *Theodore* had been so complaisant as to let them into his Secret; this is all we can be sure of, that one may affirm with good Reason, that what Turn soever the Affair takes, his Reign will be of a short Duration *.

Fare thee well, dear *Isaac*, and live content and happy.

* His Reign has been short indeed; for upon the Arrival of Troops sollicited by the *Genoese* from *France*, which undertook to be the Mediator betwixt the Republic and the *Corsicans* (but is now the Master of the Island) *Theodore* quitted the Island, after having made his Party believe he should soon return with powerful Succours; but the only News we have had of him since, is, that he was committed Prisoner to the Castle of *Gaeta*, by Order of the Court of *Naples*, but removed from thence on board a Ship by Command of a superior Power; and what *Merlin* has done with him, no body knows.

LETTER

LETTER LXXIV.

From ISAAC ONIS, *a Caraite at* Alexandria, *but formerly a Rabbi, at* Constantinople, *to* AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris.

THE first Letter which I wrote to thee from *Ægypt*, must have given thee some general Idea of the Ruins of *Alexandria*; but I am now preparing to entertain thee with some Particulars, having made myself fully acquainted with a great many Things since I arrived here.

Alexandria, as it now stands, is the second Town that was built out of the Ruins of the ancient City of that Name. When the first was taken by the *Arabians*, those People who were accustomed to live in the Fields under Tents, had no Taste for Towns, but despised them. They looked upon Palaces as Prisons, and therefore pulled down the finest and most stately, and employed the Materials in building sorry Houses, which were hardly better in Appearance than wretched Hovels; and they preserved the Columns, and some other Pieces of Architecture for their Mosques. Ancient *Alexandria* was in a manner destroyed, so that this once great City was deserted, and became a heap of Rubbish; for within it's Walls there were more Ruins than inhabited Houses. The *Mahometan* Princes reduced it's Circumference to the People that remained in it. One of *Saladin*'s Successors made Use of the Ruins of the old City,

City, which was abandoned, for building the new one, which was not above ten Miles in Compaſs; and the Walls of this new City, with the hundred Towers with which they are flanked, were partly built out of the Ruins of the Palaces. It has a double Circumference, and there are Roads made at the Foot of the Towers, by which the Soldiers that are in Garriſon may walk round it, ſecured from Inſults, either from within or without, by the double Wall. The Towers, which joined both, are very large, and of a prodigious Height; and each of them will eaſily contain above five hundred Men, and has above a hundred Rooms, all arch-roofed like thoſe of certain Caſerns which I have ſeen in my Travels in *Germany*; ſo that a Garriſon of fifty thouſand Men might be put into the modern *Alexandria*, without incommoding the Inhabitants. From hence thou mayeſt judge of the vaſt Extent of the old City.

Some People, who know no better, pretend that the Walls which I have been diſcribing to thee, were ſubſiſting in the Time of the *Romans*; but a Man who will venture to aſſert this, muſt have no Knowledge of Hiſtory: For were it ſo, the Extent of this City would not have been the fifteenth Part of what we know it muſt have been at that Time: And unleſs a Man be ſtark blind, he will eaſily be convinced, by his own Obſervation, that theſe Walls could not have been built either by the *Greeks* or the *Romans*; for they conſiſt of a vaſt Number of broken Pieces of Marble and Pillars, with Stones mingled here and there; and the Walls of the new *Alexandria* are a Mark of the Ruins and Spoils of the old City. But after all, dear *Mouceca*, this modern *Alexandria*, which I am deſcribing to thee, is not the true City of *Alexandria*, as it ſubſiſts at this Day; and there are ſcarce two hundred

hundred Persons that inhabit the Ruins which it contains. It is so deserted, in short, that in the Night-time, and till it is quite broad Day, there is no passing it without running a very great Risque of being robbed; the most solitary Forest being a much safer Place than within it's Walls. The old Buildings which subsisted there, having been partly destroyed by Time, and partly by Wars, the People weary of dwelling among Ruins were resolved to change to a more agreeable Habitation; they settled themselves by Degrees towards that Place which is called the *Port-neuf*, or New Harbour, exactly upon the Sea-side: There they founded a third *Alexandria*, and quite abandoned the second, wherein there are only a few Mosques left standing, which they have preserved for the Sake of their Beauty. This new City is as much inferior to the second *Alexandria*, as the second was to the ancient and true one.

I find, dear *Monceca*, it is the same with Empires as it is with Men: They rise to a certain Degree, then sink insensibly, and at last totally run to Ruin. Thus has the Empire of the East passed from the *Persians* to the *Greeks*, from the *Greeks* to the *Romans*, and from the *Romans* to the *Turks*. How do we know to whom it may be transferred some Ages hence? Perhaps the Time of such Revolution is not very distant. We observe the Formation of some new Empires to be almost as sudden as the Rise of some Men, and the Fall and Extinction of such Empires as quick as that of wretched Mortals. A Man who forty or fifty Years before the Reign of *Alexander*, should have told the *Macedonians* that they would have been Masters of all *Asia*, and of a Part of *Europe*, would undoubtedly have been reckoned a Madman: For the Thing happened so suddenly, that if we had not

not as much Certainty of the Fact as we have, one would imagine the Histories of that are handed down to us to be only Romances.

If the late King of *Sweden* had not lost that famous Battle which preserved his Rival on the Throne, what Countries might he not have been Master of? What a sudden Revolution might not have happened when the said King of *Sweden*, was a Fugitive in *Turky*, if a Number of Peasants picked up in haste, and mounted upon Horses, for most Part without either Saddle or Bridle, had not defeated the *Danes*, who strove to force their Way into *Sweden*, which was then destitute of Money and Troops, without a King, and without Hopes of Succours? To what a Pass was all that Glory of *Charles* XII. reduced? He ran a Risque of acting the same low Part under the Wing of the Grand Signior, as the Pretender does under that of the sovereign Pontiff.

If *Lewis* XIV. had won the Battle of *Hochstet*, what would have become of the Empire? I do not pretend to say what, but I fancy that at least it ran as great a Hazard, as it did when the *Turks* besieged *Vienna*. *France* was not in the most happy Way, if some Years after that, Marshal *Villars* had not beat the Allies at *Denain*. Almost all Empires have had some dangerous Shock at one Time or another, though they have had a happy Escape, but perhaps at another Time the Disorder may prove mortal.

When the *Huns*, the *Goths*, the *Vandals*, and that Swarm of People that came from the northern Provinces, ravaged the *Gauls* Country and *Italy*, they overturned and destroyed almost all the Dominions they came to, and quite changed the Face and Form of *Europe*. What are become of the old *Romans* at this Day? Perhaps there are none even

at

at *Rome* itself, but the Descendants of the *Goths*, *Huns*, and *Gauls*, and not a Stain remaining of *Roman* Blood.

I think, dear *Monceca*, that I have Reason to say, that as soon as an Empire is arrived to a certain Point of Elevation, it diminishes insensibly; and those which have acquired their Grandeur with the greatest Rapidity, sink likewise with the greater Ease.

The *Switzers* have subsisted for a good Number of Ages, without having suffered any very material Changes, because as they are careful to preserve their Liberty and their Country, they have not abandoned themselves to the blind Ambition of making Conquests.

Venice and *Genoa* by grasping too much Country, have reduced themselves to a sad Condition. In the Space of a Century, the former lost two Kingdoms *; and not many Years ago it was robbed of a flourishing Province †: But perhaps it will enjoy more quiet, and not be subject to such Accidents in the Mediocrity to which it is now reduced. The latter is at a Plunge, it has just lost all *Corsica*, and will soon be in as melancholy a Situation as the Republic of *Lucca*. That proud City of *Genoa*, which formerly made the Emperors of *Constantinople* tremble ‡, cannot defend itself now against a meer Soldier of Fortune ‖, with a Rabble of sorry Peasants under his Command, half naked, and half starved.

* *Cyprus* and *Candia*. † The *Morea*.

‡ The *Genoese* were once Masters of *Pera*, one of the principal Suburbs of *Constantinople*.

‖ The Baron *de Newhoff*.

A Mediocrity

A Mediocrity is ſometimes of as much Service to the Continuance and Preſervation of Governments, as it is to the Tranquility and Felicity of the People. The *Dutch* have that wiſe Maxim, not to be ambitious of making Conqueſts. The Goverment of the United Providences reaſons and thinks as ſenſibly as an honeſt Man, the Father of his Family, who content to leave his Children a Patrimony well cultivated, does not deſire to increaſe it by incroaching on the Fields and Eſtates of his Neighbours.

I ſhould be glad to hear any one good Argument to juſtify the Theft of great Robbers; then I ſhould believe *Julius Cæſar* and *Alexander* were honeſt Men; but till then, I am tempted to conſider them as a couple of illuſtrious Highwaymen, who had ſeveral excellent Qualities which were obſcured by an invincible Inclination to Robbery. Why is it not as great a Crime to rob a Town, as to ſteal a Cabbage out of a Garden? *Cicero* attempted to prove that all Sins were equally criminal; but he never preſumed to carry the Paradox ſo far as to maintain, that it was not as ſinful to rob a great deal, as to pilfer a little.

I return to *Alexandria*. There are ſtill to be ſeen within the Incloſure of the Walls that I have been deſcribing to thee, certain Fragments of Architecture that are worthy the Admiration of all good Judges. Such is that ſtately Colonade in the Middle of this Incloſure, which conſiſts of a Row of Pillars ſtill ſtanding, of an extraordinary Bulk and Height, that formed an Oval, in the Middle of which was the moſt ſuperb public Square of *Alexandria*. The immenſe Ruins near this Colonade, ſeem to denote that the fineſt Palaces of this ancient City fronted that ſtately Piece of Architecture every Way, or thoſe Palaces perhaps advanced

vanced to those Pillars on which the former Walls rested, and so formed the Porticos under which the People walked.

Next to this famous Monument, the greatest Curiosities are the two Needles, or Obelisks, which are ascribed to *Cleopatra*; one is still standing, and the other thrown down, and half buried in the Sand. The four Sides of these Needles are full of hieroglyphical Figures, which give only a faint Idea of what they represented to the View of the Ancients, to whom they were speaking Characters.

The famous Column of *Pompey* is another Piece worthy of Admiration. Of all the splendid Antiquities of *Alexandria* and it's Neighbourhood, there scarce remain any Ruins so entire as this Column. It has very beautiful Proportions, and the nicest Eye can find no Defect in it; it consists of three Pieces, of which the Chapiter makes one, the Shaft and three Feet of the Base form the second, and the rest of the Base the third. It is eighty Feet between the Base and the Chapiter, and a hundred and ten Feet in Height; so that I take it to be the highest and biggest in the World.

The ancient Monuments, of which I have been treating, dear *Monœca*, must one Day have the same Fate as the many others that have preceded them; they will be demolished and overthrown. They have already received some Shocks by Time, and it is quite unknown now by whom they were set up. The Names of *Pompey* and *Cleopatra*, which are fixed to these Pillars, are not, according to all Appearance, the Names of those who erected them; and why those Names are given to them, there is no Certainty. Temples, Palaces, Triumphal Arches, do not immortalise either Sovereigns or private Persons. It is great Actions or Writings that are sure to make us live for ever in the Memory

Memory of Man *. How many Monuments have there not been destroyed since *Alcibiades*, *Themistocles*, *Miltiades*, and those other illustrious *Greeks* whom the Fame of their Actions has transmitted to the latest Posterity! How many Temples and Palaces have been overturned since the Death of *Homer!* But that illustrious Genius still lives amongst us, and he is the Darling of all Nations now, as he was formerly of the *Greeks*. They are only the meaner Sort, who, for want of Talents of their own to pierce through the obscure Night of Time, endeavour to outstretch it by immense Piles of Stones and Marble.

Fare thee well, dear *Monceca*, live contented and happy, and take great Care of thy self.

* Exegi Monumentum ære perennius
Regali situ Pyramidum altius;
Quod non imber edax, non aquilo impotens,
Possit diruere, aut inumerabilis
Annorum Series, & fuga temporum.
Non omnis moriar; multaque Pars mei
Vitabit Libitinam: usque ego posterâ
Crescam Laude recens; dum Capitolium
Scandet cum tacitâ virgine Pontifex.

Hor. Ode xxx. *lib.* iii.

Thus Translated by Mr. CREECH.

'Tis finish'd; I have rais'd a Monument
More strong than Brass, and of a vast Extent;
Higher than *Ægypt*'s stately Pyramid,
That costly Monument of Kingly Pride,
As high as Heav'n the Top, as Earth the Basis wide:
Which heating Showers, nor North Wind's feebler Blasts,
Nor whirling Time, nor Flight of Years can waste:
While *Horace* shall not die, his Song shall save
The greatest Portion from the greedy Grave:
Still fresh I'll grow, still green in future Praise,
Till Time is lost, and *Rome* itself decays;
Till the chief Priest and silent Maid no more
Ascend the Capitol, and *Jove* adore.'

LETTER LXXV.

From JACOB BRITO, *at* Lyons, *to* AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris.

I AM arrived at *Lyons*, from whence I propose to set out as soon as I can for *Montpellier*, where I shall make but a very short Stay, because I am in great haste to go to *Spain*. The Situation I am in, dear *Monceca*, enables me to judge for myself of the Accounts thou hast given me of the Manners and Customs of the *French*. I find thy Reflexions just, and the Hints I have had from thy Letters are of infinite Service to me; I have some Foretaste of many Things, that I see and examine very sedately, which would surprize and astonish me, if I was not prepossessed.

At my Quarters there are two *Parisian Jansenists*, banished to this City by a *Lettre de Cachet*; there is nothing so pleasant as to hear them dispute with a young Abbé, who hopes to get a Benefice by the Interests of the *Jesuits*. It must be owned that he richly deserves the Present they give him reason to expect, and that he battles it for the Party wherever he comes with infinite Courage. When he cannot defend himself by Arguments, he has Recourse to Invectives; and very often, if we did not check his Rage and Impetuosity, he would take one of those *Jansenists* by the Collar, and so their Disputes would be decided by dint of Fist.

Two or three Days ago, a Priest, who is a bitter Enemy to the *Jesuits*, came and dined at our Quarters;

Quarters: 'I have an Account, *said he*, from *Dole* 'that Father *Girard* has wrought several Miracles 'since his Death; but if it be true, there is not a 'Fellow that is broke upon the Wheel or hanged, 'but may work Miracles too; the Gibbets and 'Gallows of *Montfaucon* will make special Cata-'combs; and Reliques will become Dog-cheap. 'You are a Fool, *says the young Abbé to this* Janse-'nist *Priest*, and to do you Justice you ought to 'be tucked up by the Neck to those Gibbets you 'talk of, in Company with Father *Nicholas*, *la Ca-'diere*, and all her Knavish Family. I will call my 'Landlady, and tell her that I am resolved to leave 'her House, if she hereafter entertains Persons that 'are excommunicated *ipso facto*, and the Adherents 'of such a Heretic as the Impostor *Paris*. Me-'thinks, little Gentleman, *said the* Jansenist, you 'give yourself mighty Airs. No more than I ought 'to do, *replied my little Abbé*, and I swear to you 'by my Band, and the Cassoc on my Back, that if 'you ever think fit to take up the Cudgels, and to 'declaim against worthy Men, wherever I am, I 'will teach you to hold your Prating. You! *replied 'the* Jansenist, shall such a Snotty-nose Prig as 'you make me hold my Tongue, when the Re-'spect I owe to my Prince cannot silence me! By 'G—d I should be glad to see how you would go 'about it. The Thing is very easy, *said the Abbé*, 'and if you say but a Word more, I will imme-'diately stop your Mouth by letting a Plate fly at 'your Head! What the Devil! *replied the* Janse-'nist, a Plate at my Head! A Plate at the Head 'of a Batchelor of the *Sorbonne*, thou little Ex-'crement of *Loyola!* I will make you to know who 'you talk to. At these Words the *Jansenist* was 'so provoked, that he snatched a Bottle, and if the 'two Officers, who laughed ready to burst ther-

'selves to see this Ecclesiastical Challenge, had not 'been so good-natured as to check the Fury of the 'two Antagonists, I should have been a quiet Spec-'tator of a most bloody Skirmish'.

After these two Champions were parted, 'Gen-'tlemen, *said the Officers*, you do not observe the 'Rules of the Military Art in your Squabbles; be-'fore People proceed to Violence, they should by 'a Manifesto justify their Motives for declaring 'War. This is the Practice of Sovereigns: As 'for you, Sir, you are an Enemy to Father *Gi-'rard* and the *Jesuits*; tell us your Reasons for 'it, and then the other Gentleman will please to acquaint us with his. And what would you have me say, *replied the* Jansenist, are you ignorant 'of what all the World knows? Who can help 'inveighing against a Man that has made Religion 'a Cloak for his Debauchery, who has abused 'his Character as Confessor to debauch his Penitent, 'and who, in short, by the Help of the Devil, got 'the Ascendant over her to such a Degree, that 'he could obtain her Favours as often as he pleased, 'and she had not the Power to deny him.'

The Abbé who was quite a-gog to answer his Antagonist, had not Patience to let him empty his Quiver of Reproaches. 'Father *Girard*, *said 'he*, is innocent in the Sight of all those who 'do not suffer themselves to be influenced by Ill-'will and Prejudice. He was the innocent Victim 'of a Conspiracy formed between Father *Nicholas*, 'Father *Cadiere*, and his Sister. The *Jansenists* 'intended to give a mortal Blow to an illustrious 'Society, by destroying one of its principal Mem-'bers. They did not matter how much they 'dishonoured Religion, provided they could crush 'their Enemies.

'These

'These then, Gentlemen, *said one of the Officers*, are all the Arguments that both of you have to produce. Alas! I will prove to each of you, that you are both in the wrong to dispute so eagerly upon Suppositions that are equally false I will first answer your Reasons, *continued the Officer, addressing himself to the* Jansenist, you say that Father *Girard*, abusing his Character, made his Penitent a Demoniac and debauched her: I shall prove one of these Two Things to you; either, that Father *Girard* did not seduce *la Cadiere*; or that she gave her hearty Consent.

'If the Advocates who pleaded for Father *Girard*, had been allowed to plead from the Book of Natural Reason, and had not been obliged to adopt as an Article of Faith a ridiculous Notion, which has no other Foundation and Reality than the Writings of certain Monks, and the Preachments of some Country Curates, they would have absolutely denied the Possibility of the Existence of Magicians, and that any Witchcraft could determine the Will. Suppose that a Philosopher, accustomed to make Use of his Reason, was pleading the Cause of Father *Girard* in the Court of the Parliament of *Provence*, *Is it possible*, he would say, *that a Man who has lived fifty Years in Reputation for his Virtue, should be accused of the most heinous of Crimes, and but one Proof produced of it contrary to all the Notions of Evidence? Then the Philosopher calling sound Philosophy to his Aid*, Let us see, *says he*, Gentlemen, if it was possible for Father *Girard* to direct the Will of *la Cadiere*, to put her into Trances, to give her Marks in her Body, to make her sweat Blood through her Pores, and to cause Crowns of Thorns to sprout from her Head, he absent all the while, and acting only by the Aid of Philtres.

'It is certain that several Liquors are capable of 'producing extraordinary Effects in us, and of quite 'changing our Habits. The Remedies that are in 'Medicines, the subtle Poisons, whose Effects are 'as quick as that of a Dagger stuck into the Heart, 'are convincing Proofs of the Power which certain 'Philtres have to act upon our Senses. Bus is it 'not absurd to maintain, that they produce Ef-'fects so contrary to Nature, and alter the very Es-'sence of Things? Is it not ridiculous to say, that 'a Draught has the Power to make Wood and 'Thorns grow, and sprout forth from the Brain of 'a Person, and then to shrink back into the same 'Brain as a Snail into it's Shell? To this must be 'referred that certain Axiom received by all Phi-'losophers, *A Thing cannot communicate what it has 'not it self.* Now how can a Liquor produce 'Wood, and form *la Cadiere*'s Crown? For when 'she was in that famous Trance wherein that mi-'raculous Crown appeared, it is agreed that Fa-'ther *Girard* was absent: It must be therefore 'owned that Philtres not being able to produce 'those Thorns, and Father *Girard*, when absent, 'not being able to give them, *la Cadiere* her self 'must have placed them in her Head-dress. When 'she had shewn herself in her pretended Trances, 'she went at least halves with Father *Girard*, 'in imposing upon the Public, and I defy any 'one that makes Use of his Reason to think 'otherwise.

'It is extremely ridiculous to presume to assert 'that Father *Girard*, as powerful as God himself, 'was able to determine the Will of *la Cadiere* by 'a superior Motion, in such a Manner, as that it 'must necessarily be forced to yield to the Designs 'of her Confessor. All the Love-Potions in the

'World

'World cannot reduce and determine the Will to 'a fixed Point. *Matter can only act upon Matter.* 'How then can a liquid Draught act directly upon 'the Will, to produce a certain and determinate 'Effect? Otherwise it only operates by the Sensa-'tions and Motions which it produces on the Body. 'Thus by Philtres the Blood may be heated, the 'Spirits may be disposed to Love, and Motives of 'Concupiscence may be raised, but they who take 'them are not thereby determined to one particular 'Object more than to another.

'The Will remains free; and by disposing the 'Heart to a tender Passion, an unknown Person 'may as easily be the better for it as a Lover. The 'Favours which the Agitation of the Spirits, and 'the Desires of Concupiscence have rendered easy 'to obtain, are absolutely disposed of by Whimsy 'and the Will. *La Cadiere* might therefore as 'well have made any other Person happy: All the 'Philtres of Father *Girard* did not force her to de-'termine herself in his Favour, much less to give 'such a Grace to the Frauds and Miracles which, 'I have proved, could only be operated by the stu-'died Craft of this pretended Saintess.

'You must therefore own, Messieurs *Jansenists*, 'either that the Trances, the Raptures, and Mira-'cles of *la Cadiere*, have been only invented for the 'Purpose, and to ruin that *Jesuit*, or that *la Ca-'diere* was Partner with him in all his Impostures, 'I give you the Choice of these; but which way 'soever you decide it, you must own that the Fe-'male Saint, for whom you are so zealous, deserves 'infinite Contempt instead of your Esteem.

'Now I come to you, Monsieur l'Abbé, *con-'tinued the Officer*, and I will prove to you, 'that such a Man as you, whose State demands a

'strict Morality, ought not to be an Advocate for 'Father *Girard*. You will readily grant that Father *Girard* was no Fool; he was a *Jesuit*, and 'a *Jesuit* for whom his Order had an Esteem. 'After what has been said, no Person can be at a 'Loss to know his Temper and Principles. I ask 'you then, Sir, if you believe that a Man who is 'not very glad to impose upon the Public, by 'affecting to be the Dupe himself, could give into 'all the Extravagances of *la Cadiere*, and twenty 'or thirty other pious Ladies, most of whom were 'at least without having taken Love-Potions, as 'much heated as *la Cadiere*? The noted *Batarel*, 'the principal and the most illustrious of this honest *Jesuist*'s Female Saints, cooled her Flames 'sometimes by amorous Kisses; which is a Fact 'he himself has owned *. But alas! Sir, is that 'the Behaviour of a chaste, prudent Priest, who is 'zealous for the Cause of his Religion? Own 'therefore, that if Father *Girard* was neither a 'Magician, nor guilty of spiritual Incest, he was 'at least a great Knave, and a consummate Hypocrite. Do not believe that while I accuse him, 'I am for justifying his Adversary Father *Nicholas*;

* Being interrogated, if he did not kiss Miss *Batarel*, at *Cadiere*'s House? he answerd, That as he went to take his Leave of *Cadiere*, the Night before he departed for *Oulioulle*, *Batarel* being there at the same Time, *Batarel* desired him to step aside for one Moment into a Chamber, on pretence of speaking to him in private: and that the said *Batarel* shutting the Chamber-Door on a sudden, embraced the Respondent without saying a Word to him; upon which he flung himself immediately out of her Arms. *General Collection of the Pieces relating to the Process between Miss* Cadiere, *&c.* Interrogat. 149. Tom. v. p. 40.

'for

'for he was at least as guilty as the other, and not 'near so scrupulous. The *Jesuit* preserved a cer-'tain Decency; as he was examining a Wound un-'der the Left Breast, he had an Excuse ready if he 'had taken a Fancy to have kissed it, being polite 'in all his Ways, the austere and pious Look ne-'ver abandoned him *. But the *Carmelite* acted 'like a *Carmelite*; he never once minced the Matter, 'and, without standing upon Trifles, he used the 'Privileges of his Order †.

'You must own therefore, M. l'Abbé, that your 'Zeal for Father *Girard* is extravagant; and to tell 'you frankly my Mind, a Man must be very fond 'of defending strange Paradoxes, who offers to justi-'fy him. The Public cries out against the Arret 'of the Parliament of *Provence*, by which those 'three Persons were acquitted; but since it did not 'punish them all three alike, I think it could not 'do better.'

How just soever this Officer's Arguments appeared, the little Abbé and the *Jansenists* did not seem very well pleased; however, they each went his way, knitting their Brows at one another most terribly.

The Post is just going off, and I conclude my Letter.

Fare thee well, dear *Monceca*, live content and happy.

* Being interrogated, If he never kissed that Wound? He answered, No; but that, If he had thought it proper to kiss the Ulcer, he should have only followed the Example of the Saints, and have done it either from a Principle of Religion, or for Mortification. *Collect* Tom. v. p. 34.

† It is proved in several Parts of the Process, that Father *Nicholas* had a strong Inclination to debauch *la Cadiere*, and that they went to Bed in the Country in the same Chamber. *Collect.* Tom. v. p. 103.

LETTER LXXVI.

From AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris, *to* JACOB BRITO, *at* Lyons.

I RECEIVED thy Letter from *Lyons*; the Story of the *Jansenist* and the little Abbé made me very merry. The Officer who endeavoured to reconcile them, seemed to me to be a Man of good Sense, and I am inclined to believe that he has a just Notion of the Affair of the Jesuit *Girard*. I was always convinced in my own Mind that there was Knavery, Craft, and Imposture on both Sides. *Cadiere*'s pretending to be bewitched, plainly shews the Ridicule of one Part of her Depositions; yet how absurd soever it was to accuse her of being bewitched, it was absolutely necessary; for otherwise Father *Girard* could not have been attacked; and *Cadiere* being a Partner in his Crime, would have been liable to Punishment: She would therefore have kept silence; but as soon as a Verdict was given that she was determined by a superior Power, she would be no longer guilty, and the whole would be chargeable upon the Devil and the Conjurer.

The *Nazarenes* have such a strong Faith in Witchcraft, Sorcery, and the like, that there is nothing so absurd but they are by this Means made to believe: Imposture becomes a Miracle, and is thought worthy of being regarded as an Effect of the immediate Will of the Deity, the Moment that such Imposture is covered with the Veil of Obsession and Possession. There is nothing so pleasant as the Dialogues which some Friars have with the Demoniacs whom they exorcise. They enter

enter into a thousand little Familiarities with the Devil. They crack Jokes upon one another; and one would be apt to take *Beelzebub* for a *Merry-Andrew*, and *Satan* for an amiable complaisant *Petit-Maitre*. The following are the original Terms of one of those infernal Conversations: I fancy they may be an Amusement to thee. It is a Monk that speaks.

'The Sister *Benaventure* being possessed by a 'Devil called *Arfaxa*, came to me to be confessed, 'saying she would go to no body else; and it must 'be observed, that this Devil was always fond to 'talk to me*.'

Thou perceivest, dear *Brito*, that the *Nazarene* Monks know all the Devils by their Names and Surnames, and that the latter have a Kindness for the Fryars, and are very eager for an Opportunity to converse with them. I must own to thee, that I should be very apt to think that there is an actual Sympathy between the Monks and the Devils, though I fancy the latter are not near so malicious: As thou wilt perceive by the Trick which this same Fryar played the Devil *Arfaxa*. His own Words are these:

'I fell down upon my Knees before this Devil, 'telling him that my Design was to come and 'confound my Pride, by that of the Devils, and to 'learn Humility of them, in spite of their Teeth. 'This Devil was enraged to see me in this State, 'and told me, that he had received a Command to 'prevent me. And as I was continuing to make 'my Obeisance, he was resolved to take the Ad-

* The Collection of what passed at the exorcising of certain Nuns of the Town of *Louviers*, by the Reverend Father *Gaufre*, Printed at *Paris* with Permission. Anno 1643. p. 30, and 31.

'vantage of it, and said to me, *Thou adorest me*; 'I replied, *thou art too infamous, Villain.* I consi- 'der thee as the Creature of my God, and the Ob- 'ject of his Wrath; therefore I am for submitting 'to thee, because thou dost not deserve it; and 'instantly I will come to kiss thy Feet. *The De- 'vil surprized at this Motion, hindered me.*' What dost thou think, dear *Brito*, of all these Tricks? A Monk must be very crafty and very malignant, if he has the Secret to make a Fool of the Devil, and to put him into a Rage. Who would have said to *Arfaxa*, that the Impatience he had to converse with this Fryar would subject him to be bantered and jeered. Yet that is not all the Scene; the Conclusion of which is much more mortifying to the Devil, and more for the Honour of the Monk. *Upon this*, continues he, *I conjured this Devil to shew me as far as was possible the Will of God, either that I should kiss his Feet, or he kiss mine. The Answer he made me was*, Thou knowest what Impulse thou hast from God; follow it.

This Answer savours as much of the *Norman* as of the Devil; *Arfaxa* was not a Fool; he was afraid to be the Cause of his Enemies Humiliation, and by that Means to open the Gates of Heaven to him: Nor did he care on the other hand to kiss the Feet of a Fryar, who made such scurvy-Sport with a Devil that had shewn such a Friendship for him. He therefore left the Question undecided, believing that the Monk perhaps would not determine himself; but he had Cunning enough to outwit *Arfaxa*. He fell at his Feet, and kissed them; at which the Devil was heartily enraged; *Afterwards*, says this Fryar, *I commanded him, by the Reliques of Father* Bernard, *to kiss mine*; *which he did with great Readiness.*

This,

This, dear *Brito*, is sheer Malice to Perfection; and sure I am, that *Arfaxa* little thought that the Reliques of Father *Bernard* would serve him such a slippery Trick.

I know not whether thou tookest Notice of this Devil's ready Obedience, as soon as Mention was made to him of St. *Bernard*'s Skeleton: The Virtue of it must be very particular; since it is capable of influencing the infernal Spirits. This History seems to confirm the Stories that are told of the Charms performed by the Witches of old Time; *Horace* speaks of one *Canadia*, who in the Composition of her Philtres made use of Bones which she dug out of Church-yards. The *Nazarenes* fancy that in some Bones there is a great Virtue. The *Mahometans*, especially the *Persians*, have the same Notion. But in my Opinion, People must be very fond of giving an Air of Mystery and Religion to the most common Things, by supposing a Piece of Earth to be sacred, and, as one may say, a Part of the Deity.

What the *Nazarenes* call Reliques, is only a simple Portion of Matter, of a Piece with all the rest, and which has no more Virtue than the least and most contemptible Part of it. For if the Matter of which a Bone is formed, had Qualities superior to the Powers of common Matter, and partook of the Divine Power, it could never lose it's Advantages. Now there is nothing so easy as to bring the Head of a Saint, to form in process of Time a Part of the Body of a Highway-man: Then the Matter which composed the Head of the Saint will have certainly lost it's divine Virtue. And it is as ridiculous to assert that a Thing can use it's internal Qualities and Faculties by the different Form that is given to it, as it is to say, that a Piece of Marble becomes cold because it is square. But it is still more difficult to comprehend, how those Bones

car

can lose their Attributes, because, being in some respect Divine, they must be the less subject to Alteration. Suppose that a Beast should eat the Head of a Saint, and that this Beast killed by a Gipsy or a Vagabond, should serve him, after being salted, for his Diet six Months, it is certain that several of the Parts of the Matter that formed the Head of the Saint will be diffused in the Members of the Gipsy. I demand, whether they will then have the Virtue to work Miracles, and to sanctify the *offending* and *unclean* Parts to which they will be joined. If it should be answered, that they have no longer any Power, I deny with good Reason that they ever could have any; because it is not the different Configuration that gives the internal Qualities to Matter; a Load-stone having the same Attraction of Iron, be it round or square. Perhaps it will be said, that God permits that those Bones should operate while they are Bones, but not when they are pulverized. If so, I challenge the most zealous *Nazarenes* to shew me in the Books of their chief Doctors *, where God has revealed that he has granted a Power to Bones to act as strongly as the Deity; and though I am a *Jew*, I am ready in that Case to submit implicitly to their Opinion; but I have no fear that they will be able to convince me: For there is not a Word said of Bones in the fundamental Books of their Religion.

Though I make this public Declaration against the Superstition of Reliques, I do not approve of the extraordinary Contempt which certain People affect of the precious Remains of Persons that have rendered themselves venerable by their Piety and good Behaviour, during the whole Course of their Lives. Where is that Man who does not respect the Tomb of his Ancestors, or that durst prophane their Ashes?

* The Apostles.

Virtuous

Virtuous Men are the Fathers of their Country, which is obliged to them for the Knowledge of Good, and for the Means of attaining to it. Let the *Nazarenes* honour the Tombs of some of their Ancestors as much as they will, I approve of their Maxims. But if they deify their Ashes and their Reliques; if they ascribe as much Power to them as to God himself; if with the Censer in their Hands, like to the Pagans, they cense Splinters of Bone and Shreds of Stuff upon Altars; I then condemn their extravagant Zeal, and think their Notion altogether ridiculous: So that I am almost byassed in Favour of their Adversaries, who are in the other Extream too careless and indifferent as to the melancholy Remains of illustrious Men, the Sight of which may be a very great Motive to Virtue. Statues are erected every Day to great Monarchs, and to illustrious Generals, in order to animate their Equals, to deserve such Monuments by eminent Actions. Reliques that are preserved carefully, and respected, are as good as stately Mausoleums and Tombs for exciting People to Virtue.

Therefore, dear *Brito*, I do not condemn the *Nazarenes*, for the Care they take in preserving certain Bones: But what I blame them for, is the Worship they pay to them, and the Abuse of them by the Monks, like the Fryar I told thee of just now, a confident Lyar, who abusing the Ashes of his Father *Bernard*, commanded the Devils by the Power of a Skeleton.

The Thing which has brought Reliques into Contempt, is their being bought and sold like Wares, for more or less Money, according to the Name of the Makers. Some of the Sovereign Pontiffs have sold a great Number of them very cheap, and others have kept them up at a very extravagant Rate; they have searched for them in all Places where

where they thought they could find them; and when the true ones have failed, they have forged a great number of false ones, like to certain avaricious Sovereigns, who after having drained their Subjects of all their Gold, give them Bits of Paper in Exchange for it of an imaginary Value. The Power which is ascribed to Reliques of working Miracles of all Kinds, proceeds from the same Source, and it's Covetousness that gives them those surprising Virtues. The sovereign Pontiffs have acted just like the Mountebanks, who for the better Sale of their Balsam, ascribe all manner of Virtues to it. Reliques, Demoniacs, and Indulgences, are three inexhaustable Mines, which bring in more Profit to the Fryars, than *Peru* and *Brasil* do to the *Spaniards* and *Portuguese*. All the Business is to set them off cleverly. There are certain *Nazarene* Fryars that know how to extract the Quintessence of these Ecclesiastic Treasures: they exorcise even the brute Beasts, though there is not a *Nazarene* so silly as to believe their being possessed with a Devil. Thou must not think this extraordinary; for the Devils take a Trip sometimes into the Bodies of Animals, when they cannot find better Employment. I have read in a Book *, 'That a Devil once possessed a Cow, and that 'he sometimes cut capers in her Belly, and sometimes on her Back. One *Martin*, says the Author, 'seeing what a sad Plight the poor Beast was in, 'order'd the Devil to let her alone, and depart. 'The Cow was so sensible of this *Martin*'s Kindness to her, that she came politely to pay him her 'Homage, fell on her Knees, and lowed three 'Times to shew her Gratitude.

As ridiculous as this Tale appears, there are many much more so which the *Nazarene* People

* See the Legend of St. *Martin*.

firmly

firmly believe to be true; they are told very gravely that the Stories of this Kind are authentic, and generally acknowledged for Facts; and they are assured of this so often that they really believe it.

O Sacred Hunger of pernicious Gold;
What Bands of Faith can impious Lucre hold *.

Farewell, dear *Brito*, and live content and happy.

* ——— *Quid non Mortalia Pectora cogis,*
Auri sacra Fames! Virg. Æn. lib. iii.

LETTER LXXVII.

From ISAAC ONIS, *a Caraite, at* Cairo, *and formerly a Rabbi, at* Constantinople, *to* AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris.

IT is now near a Month that I arrived at *Cairo*, but one thing or another has prevented me from writing to thee sooner. This City owes it Foundation to one *Giauher*, Vizier of the Caliph *Meezledin*, who conquered *Ægypt*. This Vizier caused a thick high Wall to be built round a Plain in which his whole Army lay encamped. His Master, the Caliph, a mortal Enemy of Towns, as are most of the *Arabs*, thinking this a more pleasant Residence than *Alexandria*, caused his Tents to be set up there; but by degrees some Houses were built in that Inclosure. In process of Time it was full of Palaces and public Structures, and at last it grew

grew to be a magnificent City, which was insensibly inriched with the Ruins of the Town of *Masr*, which it's Citizens abandoned in order to come and dwell in this new Place. *Giauher*, in Memory of his Conquest, had given this City the Name of *El Cahera*, which, as thou knowest, is the *Arabic* Word for *Victorias*: And from hence some Merchants of *Florence* and *Venice*, who were the first *Nazarene* Merchants that were allowed to settle in this City, formed the Name *el Cairo*, to which they added the Epithet *Grand*, to denote the Extent and Beauty of it *.

That, dear *Monceca*, was the true Origin of *Cairo*; and all other Accounts of it given by Historians, are contradictory to Truth and the best *Arabian* Historians. This City is now the Metropolis of *Ægypt*, and the Seat of the Basha who commands that Province. The Porte always trusts one of the principal Men among the *Turks* with this important Post; and he lives in a Castle, or sort of Citadel very poorly fortified if compared to the strong Towns of the *Nazarenes*. This Citadel was built about seven hundred Years ago, by *Saladin*.

In *Cairo* there are several Pieces of Antiquity which were brought thither in the Time of the Caliphs, either from *Alexandria*, or from Upper and Lower *Ægypt*. There are also the Ruins of several old Palaces built and inhabited by the Sovereigns of *Ægypt*, and by the chief Lords of their Courts. The Gildings of the Cielings which have escaped the Inclemencies of the Weather, still look as fresh as if the Workman had but just finished them. The Mosques of this City are very beautiful, but they do not come near to those of *Constantinople*.

* See Mr. *Mallet*'s Account of *Ægypt*. Part I.

That

That of *Ashur*, which is the most magnificent, is far inferior to the seven chief Mosques of the Imperial City. They are built here as in other Places, covered with Domes, and adorned with several Minarets or Steeples *.

There are about *Cairo* several Tombs of the *Mahometan* Doctors or Santons, which are very much frequented by a great Number of Persons who pay extraordinary Devotion to them. One of the principal Tombs is that of the famous Dr. *Chafaï*; it is almost as good an Annuity to certain Santons and Dervishes that take care to keep it in Repair, as the Chine or Rump-bone of St. *Francis* is to his Disciples the *Franciscans*. The *Turkish* Monks have as much Zeal for their Saints as the *Nazarene* Monks have for theirs. The boldest Convulsionary *Jansenist* could not have fallen upon a more crafty Method than they did to secure *Chafaï* to themselves.

A Sovereign of *Ægypt*, who was Caliph of *Babylon*, and kept his Court there, was desirous to have the Body of this famous *Chafaï* carried to all the Places where he chose to reside; he wrote to the Governor of *Ægypt* to cause it to be taken out of the Ground, and to send it to him in a magnificent Coffin: The Governor was very sorry for this Order, because, knowing what a profound Veneration all the People had for this pretended Saint, he dreaded an Insurrection; and in order to avoid the sad Consequences which commonly attend popular Risings, he communicated the Order which he had received to the Dervishes, whom he exhorted to submit to the Commands of their

* They are Towers that serve for Steeples. The *Turks* call the People to Prayers regularly five times a Day.

Prince-

Prince, and recommended it to them to dispose the Populace to consent to the Removal of the Saint. *I will go to-morrow*, said he to them, *and perform the Caliph's Command; do you therefore be ready with all Necessaries.* The *Turkish* Monks were not astonished at the Summons; they resolved to act to some Purpose, and to oppose the Orders of the Sovereign, but in such a Manner as should not make him their Enemy. To effect this with Ease, they resolved to cover their Fraud with a Miracle, and to secure Heaven on their Side. That is the grand Secret to attain to the End of the most difficult Enterprizes. They worked all Night to finish their Project, and after having opened the Saint's Tomb, they put combustible Matter round the Corpse, mixed with some Phosphorus, which would take Fire as soon as it took Air. After they had prepared every Thing, they very calmly waited for the Governor, who, on Pretence of doing the more Honour to the Saint, repaired to his Tomb with a Retinue of ten thousand Men; though all this Apparatus and Pomp was only to keep the People from rising up in Arms. As soon as he was arrived, the Workmen began to open the Ground. When they came to the Place where the Corpse lay, and began to give Air to the Phosphorus, the combustible Matters took Fire, and such a hot bright Flame burst out of the Tomb that they who dug there were deprived for some Moments of their Sight: They were the first that cried out *a Miracle*; the Populace did the same; and then the Priests proclaimed that it was not the Saint's Will to quit the Place of his Retirement. The Imagination of the *Egyptians*, which is ripe for Prodigies, greedily catched at this; and the Tomb was instantly covered up again, without presuming to go any farther to work. The Governor, like a good

a good Politician, and as good a Courtier, artfully took the Advantage of this pretended Miracle to satisfy the People, without slighting the Orders of his Master, to whom he sent an Account of this Prodigy which above ten thousand Spectators could certify. The Caliph, when he heard that the Saint was well, and did not Care to quit his Lodging, consented to let him lie in his old Tomb, where he still continues, and where the *Mahometan* Devotees go in Crouds to pray *.

Thou must own, dear *Monceca*, that this Prank tallies exactly with the Tricks that are played by the *Nazarene* Monks: Go where we will, we shall find that Superstition feeds the Avarice of certain Men who drive a scandalous Trade with their Religion, and disgrace themselves in the Opinion of Men of Sense, to whom their Knavery is soon known.

The *Egyptians* are even more superstitious than the *Turks*, and in this Respect the *Spaniards* are scarce a Match for them. It seems as if in all Times this Country had been the Centre of ridiculous Ceremonies, and as if it chose to be a Lesson to other Nations, to shew them to what a Degree of Error the Human Understanding is liable. The ancient *Egyptians* adored the vilest and most contemptible of Animals, Crocodiles, and Ichneumons; nay, they deified Plants; *O happy Nation*, said *Juvenal*, on Purpose to banter that stupid People, *which sees their Gods grow in their very Gardens* †. I cannot imagine, dear *Monceca*, how it was possible for a polite People, acquainted as they were with the Sciences, and endowed with

* *Mallet*'s Account of *Egypt*, Part II.

† *O Sanctas Gentes, quibus nascuntur in Hortis Numina!* Juv. Sat. xv. v. 10.

Geni-

a Genius, to have ſuch blind Ideas as they had of the Deity. That the barbarous ſavage Nations ſhould fall into certain Errors, does not near ſo much ſurprize me: A Man who is capable of eating his Fellow-Creature with as good an Appetite as he would devour a Chicken, may fall into the greateſt of Errors; and no Wonder: But that a People among whom the Arts and Sciences flouriſh, who know and practiſe the moſt excellent Laws of Morality, ſhould have ſuch extravagant Ideas as to deify a Calf, and carefully to nouriſh it in a Temple, is what I cannot for my Life comprehend. For how can it be imagined that a Man who makes Uſe of his Reaſon, who raiſes his Genius to ſuch a Pitch as to meaſure the Courſe of the Stars, and to foreſee and foretel Eclipſes by an exact Calculation, can really think that a God has a Beginning and an End; and that he comes in the Form of a Calf to chew the Cud, and to browſe for the Space of twelve or fourteen Years? The *Greeks* and *Perſians*, with all their Stupidity, were not near ſo blind as this comes to.

Cambyſes being at *Memphis*, after he had conquered *Egypt*, and not knowing the Cauſe of certain Rejoicings that the People were then making, enquired into the Reaſon, and was very much ſurprized to hear that they were celebrating the Feſtival of the God *Apis*, who, after a long Space of Time, was now come to ſhew himſelf in public. Upon this he ſent for the Prieſts, and ſaid to them by way of Banter, That, if there was any Deity who was ſo gracious as to demean himſelf to the *Egyptians*, it was a Wonder he ſhould conceal himſelf from the King; and therefore he bid them bring their God *Apis* to him. But how great was the Surprize of *Cambyſes*, when the Prieſts brought a Calf to him! Being exaſperated to the laſt Degree,

gree, he drew his Dagger, and run it into the Leg of their God, who thereupon died of the Wound. *Ye Poltroons*, said he to the Priests, *are the Gods then composed of Blood and Flesh, and do they feel the Pricks of a Sword? Really such a God is fit for the* Egyptians. *But I will make you to know that you shall get nothing by abusing us, and putting a Trick upon us* *.

I am charmed, dear *Monceca*, with the noble Indignation of *Cambyses*, and am pleased to find a Pagan, notwithstanding his Idolatry, and without any other Light but Reason, sensible that the Deity could not be composed either of Flesh or Blood. The wretched Priests who served the Calf *Apis*, were as fully convinced as this Monarch, of the Vileness of their pretended Deity, whom they saw decaying every Day with their own Eyes; but they found their Advantage by imposing on the Credulity of the People.

Mankind has been in all Ages the same: Some have been glad to be deceived, and others to profit by the Weakness of their Brethren. To this was owing the Credit of *Apis*, and of the *Egyptian* Priests, that of the Oracles of *Delphos*, and of the Pagan *Greek*, and *Roman* Pontiffs, and in short of a Multitude of *Nazarene* Chimæras, and of the Monks that invented them. Errors, instead of being destroyed by Time, only alter their Shape, and assume a new Form. In all Ages there have arose Men of Eminence for their Merit and Learning, who were for opposing the Torrent, and combating Superstition: But they are commonly the Victims of their Zeal, and are generally oppressed by those from whom they endeavour to pull

* *Herodotus*, lib. i. p. 45. Translated by M. *du Ryer*.

off

off the Mask. In all Religions the Vulgar favour those most that tell them the most Chimæras and the most Fables. Thou thyself knowest how hard it was for our Brethren the *Jews* at *Constantinople* to relish their Lessons, because thou seemedst to disapprove of certain Traditions which thou thoughtest contrary to the Scriptures, and capable of hurting the Mind. The *Mahometans* do not much Care for the *Arabian* Doctors, because they are Enemies to Miracles and Superstition. The Works of *Macrisi*, a famous Author, are not so much esteemed as those of several *Mollas* and *Imans*, which are full of ridiculous Fables. The *Turks* accuse that Author of want of Religion, because he has related but very few Miracles, and even confuted several. They cannot bear that he should charge it as a Folly, to believe that the Dead return from the other World. *Savonarola*, a Dominican Fryar, smarted severely for having too publicly condemned the Frauds of the Court of *Rome*, and those of his Brethren. *Alexander* VI. sovereign Pontiff, found out the Way to check his troublesome Remonstrances, and *Savonarola* was hanged at *Florence*, with two of his Companions. The Blindness of some People is so gross, and the Malice of others so black, that it is almost impossible to open the Eyes of the one, and to mend the Hearts of the other.

Farewell, dear *Monceca*, prosper in thy Undertakings, and live content and happy.

LETTER

LETTER LXXVIII.

From AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris, *to* ISAAC ONIS, *a Caraite, at* Cairo, *formerly a Rabbi, at* Constantinople.

SOME Days ago I sent thee an Account, dear *Isaac*, of a Dispute that happened between the *Jansenists* and *Molanists*, about the Publication of a Book called the *Breviary*: This Affair is now entirely ended, for the Priests who would not receive it, have submitted, and all is hushed; but it cannot hold so long, and new Disputes will soon arise. The turbulent Temper of the *Nazarene* Priests cannot permit them to lie quiet, for to live without caballing, is to the Monks a terrible Punishment. Bawling and Disputing with one another is their main Exercise, which, painful as it is, they have Schools where they learn it, and Masters who teach them this kind of Fencing.

A young Monk is trained up at *Paris* just as a Gladiator's Apprentice was in ancient *Rome*. His Regents in Philosophy and Theology teach him the Subterfuges of the *Disparates* necessary to evade the Truth; and by the Aid of a Syllogism he exercises himself in the Quest of Methods to obscure Things that are the plainest in the World. He arms himself with a multitude of Distinctions, Divisions, and Subdivisions, by the Help of which he becomes invincible, or at least fearless of being obliged to submit to Reason and the Light of Nature. As soon as he has acquired this Talent, he begins to enter into the *Circus*, where he exercises it in the par-

ticular Assemblies of his Order; and finally when he is perfect Master of the Art of attacking Reason, he rambles like another Knight-Errant in pursuit of Adventures, and is a constant Attendant at the several Theses that are maintained, which is a Name they give to certain public Disputations that are held upon such and such Days in the Convents of the Monks. *Aristotle*, *Scotus*, and some other School-Philosophers have more Credit in these Assemblies than Reason has; and it is in vain for it to demonstrate the Evidence of any one Point, if it is not approved by *Aristotle*, or if it be condemned by St. *Thomas*.

Good Sense is a Fool that must be silent, and not attempt to combat the Opinion of those Philosophers, to whom certain Monks are attached.

In these Assemblies, and at these Disputes, he that has the best Lungs has always the better of the Argument and Reason on his Side.

Thou wouldest be astonished, dear *Isaac*, if thou wast to be at these Disputations, and to see with what Front these pretended Philosophers deny the most evident Points: Their Distinctions would quite tire out thy Patience. I am not at all surprized if heretofore Philosophy was generally contemned in *France*. What could People of Sense think of all that Jumble of *imaginary Beings*, *second Intentions*, and many other Impertinencies, which were for a long Time the Exercise of all the Philosophers? In order to destroy Prejudices, there was an obsolute Necessity for two great Men * to take up the *Ferula*, to correct all the pretended Scholars of their Age, and to force them to open their Eyes; and to see the Error in which they were plunged. But notwithstanding that they perceived

* *Des Cartes* and *Gassendi*.

their

their Mistake, the Generality of them were too self-conceited to follow the Lamp of Truth.

As for the Prejudices of certain Monks that were ignorant and prepossessed, it did not much surprize me, but I could not comprehend how Men of Genius and Penetration could be so far blinded as to think that *Aristotle* was given to Mankind as a Terrestial Deity, to instruct them in all the Secrets of the Celestial one, and that the latter had revealed to the former all his Operations and Designs. Is it possible that such a Learned Man as *Averroes* could entertain, and write such extravagant Notions *! If *Aristotle* be the supreme Truth, it is needless for Men to apply hereafter to the Discovery of the Nature of Things; they can learn nothing more that is new; every Thing is comprehended in the Writings of that *Greek* Philosopher. *He is the supreme Truth, and he is the Oracle that is to instruct us in every Thing that is possible to be known.*

Gassendi was the first Man, who in the last Century had the Courage to attack the Infallibility of *Aristotle* †; but he met with almost as many Antagonists and Enemies, as the first *Jansenists* that appealed against the Bull *Unigenitus*. The Men of Honour are obliged to him for having revived in the World the Use of a Rational Philosophy, to which a Gentleman may apply himself. This great Genius was followed by *Des Cartes*, whose new

* *Aristotelis Doctrina est summa Veritas, quoniam ejus intellectus fuit finis humani intellectûs. Quare bene dicitur de illo quod ipse fuit creatus, & datus nobis, Divinâ Providentiâ, ut non ignoremus possibilia sciri.* Averroes, de Gener. Anim. lib. v. cap. 1.

† The first Work that made this learned Man known in the World, was the Tract *Adversus Aristotelicos*.

Syſtem gave the final Blow to the School-Philoſophy, which was baniſhed for good and all by the Monks; and thoſe truly learned Men ſo well reſtored the Sciences, and ſo good an Opinion was conceived of them, that fifteen Years after the Impreſſion of *Des Cartes*'s Works, the very Women argued much more ſenſibly in Metaphyſics, than three fourths of the Divines in that Kingdom. Since that Time, People have grown more and more in love with Philoſophy. All the better Sort apply to it; and even the Courtiers, notwithſtanding the Pleaſures and Intrigues of a noiſy Court, ſpend ſome Part of the Day in the Study of it. There are many of the Magiſtrates, who unbend their Minds from the harſh and toilſome Study of the Law, by the Reading of the Books of able Naturaliſts.

Since it has been permitted to condemn an Abſurdity, though advanced by *Ariſtotle* or St. *Thomas*, and ſince the Reputation of thoſe Philoſophers is no longer the Bane of ſound Reaſon, the Sciences, and eſpecially Natural Philoſophy, have been brought to infinite Perfection. The *occult Qualities* are no longer conſidered in any other Light than as a Confeſſion of the Ignorance of the Effects of a Thing; and beſides the Diſcoveries for which we are obliged to the new Philoſophy, we are obliged to it for all the Means of knowing how to judge ſolidly of what it teaches, and prevented from thinking we know what we are ignorant of.

At the rate that People ſtudy now it is certain that more Truths are to be diſcovered in thirty Years Time, than were known before in two thouſand. As People argue only upon evident Principles, and nothing is taken for certain but what is manifeſt, Reaſon which is no longer clouded

clouded by a Number of Errors that enslaved it, acts with greater Efficacy, and more easily unfolds the Secrets it aims to discover.

Mankind, says an eminent Philosopher, *not only run into very many Errors, because they busy themselves in Questions that partake of Infinity, their Mind being at the same Time Finite, but also because they apply to those which are of a very vast Comprehension while their Minds are narrow* *. That is another inexhaustible Source of the Errors of the ancient Philosophy. It took in Questions the Human Understanding could not resolve, and which are beyond it's Reach. The School-Philosophers applied themselves to few solid Things, but fed on Chimæras, and only studied Things that were either incomprehensible or insignificant; and from a secret Vanity, and an irregular Passion for Knowledge, they sought to penetrate into the most secret and most impenetrable Truths. The pretended to resolve with ease several Questions that were unintelligible, and depending on so many Circumstances that it was impossible for the most penetrating Genius to discover the Truth of them with evident Certainty, after many Ages profound Meditation, though assisted by an infinite Number of Experiments.

Another Fault which confounded the Understanding of the School-Philosophers, was the little Method they observed in their Studies: They applied themselves to ten different Sciences perhaps in one Day; they did not reflect upon the Nature of their Understanding, nor employ it in the Search of Truth, and did not consider that the Mind of Men already too much circumscribed, ought not to be diverted from it's Meditations

* *Mallebranche*'s Search after Truth, *lib.* iii. *cap.* 3. *p.* 107.

by new Objects, which often erase the preceding ones out of the Memory. All the Smatterers in Learning, who are liable to this Fault, endeavour in vain to penetrate into Things that depend on a great many others, of which they have no Knowledge nor Perception, because they do not make due Reflexion, and are too much distracted in their Studies.

Des Cartes was only obliged for most Part of his Discoveries, *to the Methods he made Use of in his Studies, to hinder his capacious Mind from rambling to any other Objects but those of which he aimed to discover the Truth* *. Therefore how clear and distinct are the Ideas upon which he has established the Principles of his Philosophy? I know very well that this great Man was not infallible, and that his Writings, though they abound with Truths, which had not been known but for him, have a Tincture in some Parts of Human Weakness. But it is ridiculous to think that a Philosopher must write nothing but what is evident. It is enough if he gives doubtful Things as doubtful, and only proposes them to his Readers as mere Conjectures.

If the School-Philosophers had been as honest and modest as *Des Cartes*, a great many Errors, which have been warmly maintained for Ages together, would have been acknowledged long ago. Instead of those vain Disputes which only served to perplex Reason, the Learned would have communicated their Reflexions to one another sincerely, and perhaps have cleared up what they did not comprehend, though it was earnestly disputed. Huge unweildly Volumes were written, which were only full of Words, and conveyed nothing at all to the Understanding. One plain Question in Natural

* *Mallebranche*'s Search after Truth, *lib.* i. *p.* 102.

Philosophy

Philosophy cleared up in two Pages by *Des Cartes*, would have served for a Book in Folio. In justice to *Aristotle*, it must be confessed that his Natural Philosophy is much more tolerable, when stripped of the whimsical Notions which his various Commentators have added to it. It may even be said that this Philosopher had a most capacious Genius: He succeeded perfectly well in what he said of the Passions in his Rhetoric; and there are very fine Things in both his political and moral Tracts: But as to his eight Books of Natural Philosophy, they discover nothing but what was known before, and scarce any Thing but what was impossible not to be known. What Man is there that does not know that Matter cannot be said to have a new Form, if it had the same before *? Who doubts that every Thing depends upon Form, and that Matter alone does nothing? surely no Man is wiser, after having known these Things, than he was before. The eight Books of *Aristotle*'s Natural Philosophy appertain rather to Logic, than to Physics: They are only vague and general Definitions of Terms, which convey only confused Ideas to the Understanding. *Aristotle*, for Example, says indeed that there are four Elements, Fire, Air, Water and Earth, but he does not shew the Nature of them, and from all his Reasonings no just Idea of them can be conceived. *He would not even have it supposed that those Elements are the Fire, Air, Water and Earth which we see*, because then our Senses could not help communicating some Knowledge of them at least to us; but he endeavours to explain them by the Qualities of Heat, Cold, Moisture, Drought, Weight and Levity. How could Men of any Understanding content themselves with so

* That is to say, unless it be deprived of the form

loose an Explanation, which is attended with so many ridiculous Impertinences? I do not wonder at it, because out of their Deference to the Opinions of that Philosopher, they were so complaisant as to admit, that Nothing was the first Principle of Things. For what does the Privation of all Beings mean but a Nothing, a meer Nothing?

Montaigne calculated the Rise and Fall of the Principles of *Aristotle*'s Philosophy, at a Time when the *Nazarenes* in general looked upon them as infallible Oracles. *Before*, said that Author, *the Principles that were introduced by* Aristotle, *came in Vogue, other Principles contented Human Reason as they do at this Time. What Letters Patent, what special Privilege can they plead to stop the farther Course of our Invention, and to engross our Belief for all Times to come? They are no more exempt from being turned out of Doors than were those of our Ancients* †. What *Montaigne* said has happened. He foresaw that Reason would at length pierce through the Cloud; he himself despised the Philosophy of *Aristotle*, and he knew all the Defects of it.

Fare thee well, dear *Isaac*, and live contented and happy.

† *Montaigne's* Essays, *lib.* v. *p.* 141.

LETTER

LETTER LXXIX.

From JACOB BRITO, *at* Montpellier, *to* AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris.

IN my Journey from *Lyons* to *Montpellier*, where I arrived two Days ago, I was glad to make Use of the Information which thou gaveſt me of the Manners of the *French*; for if I had not been prepoſſeſſed of their Character, I know not what I ſhould have thought of moſt of the People with whom I have travelled.

I went down the *Rhone* to *Pont St. Eſprit* in the Paſſage-boat, where were about thirty of us in Company, Men and Women. There were Prieſts, Fryars, Nurſes, Soldiers, Officers, Merchants, Dogs, Cats, Squirrels, and what not; ſo that our Boat was pretty much like *Noah*'s Ark: I endeavoured to get into a Corner, as far as I could from the Racket that two young Fellows made about who ſhould ſet next to a very pretty young Laſs, who being almoſt as ſilly as the Lads, laughed with her Mouth wide open at their Quarrel. A Gaiety and Satisfaction appeared in her Countenance, and by certain Looks ſhe gave to the other Women, ſhe did as good as tell them that ſhe well deſerved ſuch Courtſhip.

During this Diſpute, an elderly Officer who ſate between a Fryar and me, began to light his Pipe: The old Soldier every now and then looked with an evil Eye at his Neighbour the Fryar, who was of ſuch a bulky Corporation that he took up three

quarters of his Room. He was in an ill Humour to be so straitened by this Fryar, but he was soon delivered from him: He had hardly began to smoak, but the Reverend Father, not accustomed to the Smell of Tobacco, made strange Grimaces. The Officer perceiving this, affected to throw the Smoak in his Face, which made the Fryar fret and frown the more, so that he had like to have fallen into a Convulsion. Mean Time he never budged from his Place, but sate fast, being loth to quit a Post that he had chose as the best in the Boat. The Officer perceiving that he could gain no Ground of him, was resolved to joke him as well as funk him. *Father*, said he, *I fancy you have an Aversion to Tobacco. Alas, Sir!* said the Monk, who thought the Officer was going to lay down his Pipe, *I have a mortal Antipathy to it. If that be the Case*, said the Military Blade very gravely, *I would advise you never to smoak.* And at the same Time he puffed out two such abominable Whiffs of Tobacco, as had like to have suffocated the poor Fryar, who fell a coughing as if he would have brought his Heart up. When he was a little recovered, he called out to the Waterman, *Friend*, said he, *the Orders are that there should be no smoaking in your Boat, see that they are obeyed. You are in the right, Father*, said the Master of the Vessel, *and the Captain will be so good, if he please, to leave off smoaking. Hark ye, Scoundrel*, replied the Officer, *all that I will be so good to do is, to thrash thee soundly with a Cudgel, and then throw thee into the River. By G—d thou art a pleasant Rascal indeed, to pretend to give the Word of Command where I am. Sir*, said he, turning towards me, *do not you think it a good jest, that after having served the King my Master thirty Years together, I shall not have the Privilege of smoaking before a Lay-Brother? You might use better Language*, replied the Fryar, *for I have*

have been a Priest longer than you have been in the Service. Why then, said the Officer, *say Mass, and sing Vespers if you will, I shall not hinder you.* The Fryar was still for pressing the Boatman to execute his Orders; *Faith,* replied he to him, *you who can preach so well, reverend Father, do you endeavour to persuade the Gentleman: As for my Part, I shall not go to pick a Quarrel with People that are above my Match. I have been baptized already, and do not care to be thrown into the River. Take my Advice for once, Reverend Father, excommunicate the Gentleman; then perhaps he will obey you.* This scurvy Drollery of the Boat-man, who aimed to pacify the Wrath of the Officer, made the Fryar quite mad. He abandoned his Place at last, and shifted his Quarters to another Corner of the Vessel. *You have no Notion,* said the Officer then to me, *of this Monkish Race; they are as troublesome to Travellers, as Creditors to young Fellows; and if one was to be ruled by these Sheep-stealing Fryars, we should be obliged to constrain ourselves in every thing that they do not like.*

While the Officer was talking to me in this Way, we came to the Place we were to dine at. As soon as we got out of the Boat, the Fryar said to me very courteously, *Pray, Sir, what did you think of that Officer's Behaviour? The Men of that Profession are intolerably rough and haughty, and shew no Regard to Persons that deserve the greatest Respect. It looks as if they thought they had a Right to treat their Company, as they treat the King's Enemies. I had rather travel with half a score Apprentice-Boys, than one of these Kill-Devil Captains.*

The Monk had no sooner left me to go into the Inn, but one of those young Fellows who had made such a Clutter to sit near the young Wench, came to me with a smiling insipid Air, *I really pitied you,*

Sir, said he, *for what you suffered this Morning; you had a very ill Situation in the Boat; those Fryars know nothing but how to mutter their Breviary: And those old Military Hectors are very troublesome; they are eternally roaring and bawling out, or they surfeit you with the Accounts of the Battles they have been at. You would have been perfectly merry if you had sate where we did; for we laughed, as you saw, all the Way; and I advise you in the Afternoon to place yourself near us.*

A tall thin Man, who had not spoke one Word all the Way, shrugged up his Shoulders and lifted up his Eyes at what the young Blockhead said; and as I returned to the Boat to fetch something that I had forgot, he took the Opportunity to speak to me privately, and said, *Suffer me, as a Fellow-Traveller, to give you a Piece of Advice; Take care how you associate by the Way with that young Fellow, or else expect to be teazed with more Questions, Impertinencies, and Nonsense, in two Hours Time, than you was ever plagued with in your Life. I speak this by Experience, for in the Voyage I have already made with him, what with his talking, whistling, and singing, he has made me deaf. Sometimes he does those three different Things all at once, and it often happens that he adds a fourth, and that he dances and capers, talks, whistles, and sings at the same Time. In short, he is the most petulant Mortal under the Sun.* The Tone of the Man's Voice, his grave Countenance, and his lean, hagged Form, made me long to know who, and what he was. After having thanked him for his Advice, I asked him if he was going very far off? *I am going*, said he, *to* Montpellier, *upon account of a troublesome Distemper that I am afflicted with; and what is worse to me than all, it is an Ailment that I have not deserved; I am suffering Penance, in short, for the Sins of my false Spouse. How, Sir*, said I,

could

could so dear a Creature as she possibly hurt you? To be sure, if she has been the Occasion of your Misfortunes, it must be innocently. I will tell you, replied the Man, *in a few Words, the Cause of my Misfortunes.*

'When I was very young, I applied myself to 'the Study of Philosophy, and endeavoured to pe-'netrate into the Nature of Things: At length, 'after a good deal of Pains and Patience, I thought 'it high time to join the Practice to the Theory. 'I prepared my Furnaces, directed my Fire, and 'began to put into Execution what had cost me so 'much Labour to learn. My Employment neces-'sarily took me up so much constant Attendance, 'that I had not Time to inspect the Bahaviour of 'my Wife; who perceiving me in such a fair 'Way of making Gold, and of attaining the Phi-'losopher's Stone, was resolved likewise on her Part 'to take some Pains for an Estate; but the best 'Expedient she could think of was, to have a Num-'ber of Lovers; and she played her Cards so well, 'that in a little Time she acquired a very hand-'some Fortune. It is true, there was something 'mixed with her Riches, which gave her a great 'deal of Mortification; and that was when she 'found the Necessity she was under of the Assist-'ance of the God *Mercury*, to repair certain Da-'mage which had been done by the Goddess *Venus*. 'The worst of it was, that these Consequences 'quite ruined my Health: My Wife, fearing that 'I should resent this Adventure, eloped one Day 'with a oet of my Acquaintance, and I know 'not whither they are gone. Yet that is not what 'troubles me, but the being forced to abandon my 'Furnaces for some Time, to go in quest of some 'Remedy for my Distemper; Health being one of 'the principal Things that a Virtuoso ought to be

'possessed

'possessed of, who hopes to be Master of the Philosopher's Stone.'

I was overjoyed, dear *Monceca*, that I had met with a Person that I could talk with concerning the Stories that are told about the pretended Philosopher's Stone. 'Pray, Sir, *said I*, is it really in 'the Power of Men to be Master of it? I confess 'that hitherto I have taken what has been said upon 'this Science, for meer Tales.' 'You were 'therefore to blame, *said he*. It is true, there are 'very few People to whom God has given the 'Power of attaining to the perfect Knowledge of 'so precious an Art. But the Reality of such Art 'is not a Thing to be doubted of. There is much 'more of this Gold made in *Europe* by the Artists, 'than what is brought from the *Indies*, *Peru*, and 'other Places. All the Directors of the Mints in '*France* own, that they every Year receive much 'more of this Gold and Silver, than is imported 'from foreign Countries. The most skilful Gold-'smiths do not doubt that there are several of these 'true Artists. They say too, that their Gold is 'much more perfect than that which is extracted 'from the Mines, and they pretend it is an easy 'Matter to distinguish it.

'The Operation of the Philosopher's Stone, *con-'tinued the Chymist*, is very possible, and I hope in 'Time to make a happy Experiment of it. It is 'true, that a vast deal of Labour and Pains is re-'quisite to attain to it. A Man ought, in the first 'Place, to be well acquainted with Nature: He 'must be endowed with a Patience, Proof against 'all cross Accidents: He should be a Man of a 'strong and vigorous Constitution; and if any one 'of these Qualities are wanting in him that attempts 'to find this Grand Arcanum, he does but torment

'himself

'himself to no purpose, for he can never bring it 'to bear.' 'May I presume, *said I to the Chymist*, 'to ask you if, by pursuing the Principles which 'are laid down in the Books that treat of this Sci-'ence, one may hope to be perfect in it?' 'There 'are few good Books, *said he*, in the great Num-'ber of those which are very much cried up, and 'which are only written by Knaves and Impostors, 'who bring this precious Art into Disgrace. Of 'all our Authors, King *Geber* is the most learned 'and the clearest; yet a Man must be a good Phi-'losopher, and perfectly acquainted with Nature, 'to understand him. According to that great Man, 'the true Way of attaining to Perfection in this 'grand Secret is, *to incorporate the Mineral Spirits*, 'when they are purified by the Art, with the per-'fect Bodies of the Metals, after being first ren-'dered volatile, and then fixed, taking care to pre-'serve all the radical Moisture, and augmenting 'the natural Heat by a reasonable Concoction of 'the Compound, which is formed by this wonder-'ful Fermentation, and which causes the whole 'Mass to boil and ferment; so that the Compound 'insinuates itself into the most subtle Parts of the 'melted Metal, purges it of all its Dross, matures 'it, and changes it into Gold.'

'I wish, *said I to the Chymist*, that your Experi-'ments may succeed according to your Heart's De-'sire, and that you may have better Luck in search 'of the Philosopher's Stone, than you have had in 'Matrimony. By your way of talking, I perceive 'that you are thorough Master of the Subject of 'your Employment; yet I have heard several able 'Philosophers say, that the Beginning of this Art 'was Deceitful, the Middle of it Painful, and the 'End of it Beggary.'

The

The Chymist endeavoured to make me alter my Opinion, and assured me, that such as with Diligence and Courage sought after this Secret, were at last amply rewarded for their Care and Pains. However he owned to me, that he had already spent three fourths of his Estate, but he hoped to compass the Work before he had wasted the Remainder. He only wanted the Return of his Health to rekindle his Furnaces, and to bring his Composition to the utmost Degree of Perfection. I found him so infatuated and prepossessed in favour of his Art, that I did not think it proper to attempt to beat it out of his Head. I had several other Conversations with him before we came to this City, in which he was continually extolling the Excellence of the Philosopher's Stone; but since our Arrival at *Montpellier* I have not seen him, and perhaps he is already in the Hands of the *Æsculapij* of this Country; of which in my next.

Take good Care of thyself, dear *Monceca*; and live content and happy.

LETTER LXXX.

From AARON MONCECA, *at* Paris, *to* JACOB BRITO, *at* Montpellier.

THIS City is as much the Centre of Ridicule, as it is of good Taste and Politeness; and it may be said, dear *Brito*, to contain the two opposite Extremes, which have each a great Number of Adherents in it; for as the Sciences are cultivated, cherished, and courted by a great Number of Gentlemen,

men, so Folly is indulged here to the last Degree, by the most impertinent People in *Europe*. As these are very numerous, they often counterbalance the Authority and Decisions of Men of Sense, and draw the silly Vulgar along with them, who are always Dupes to such as are inclined to cheat them. These form the Retinue of that Power which is in weak and prejudiced Fanatics, who made good Sense groan under Oppression, and determine Men of the greatest Abilities to let Error take it's free Course. I am sensible that it is very mortifying for Men of true Learning to be perpetually obliged to give Rules to a Rabble of conceited Fools, who are often so very impertinent as to despise the most useful Discoveries, and the most perfect Works. The most surprising thing of all is, that among those who cabal against the truly learned ones, we find Persons sometimes that have a Genius, Penetration, and a good Share of Learning too. What I say, dear *Brito*, may at first View appear to thee to be a strange Paradox; but when thou reflectest on the fantastical Humour of Men, and how ambitious the greatest Part of Mankind are to render themselves singular, and to give themselves a Lustre by maintaining the most extraordinary Opinions, thou wilt no longer wonder to see Men of Learning give a Sanction sometimes to the Fooleries of the common People, and even invent new ones.

A *Nazarene* Fryar * maintained the most extravagant System that could be conceived by the most distempered Brain, yet he was a Monk of Wit, and wrote very well; but his Ambition was to be the Head of the most impertinent Sect that ever rose against the Ancients. He did not give himself the Trouble to discuss what Faults might be found

* Father *Hardouin* the Jesuit.

in their Works; for he cut the Matter short, and maintained that the Books of the Ancients, both *Greek* and *Latin*, were after all but the Manuscripts of certain Monks since their Time, who had borrowed the Names of the ancient Authors. For Example; he denied that the *Æneid* which we have, was written by an Author that lived in the Time of *Augustus*. Nevertheless, among the Writers whom he pronounced to be apocryphal, he spared *the Works of* Pliny *the Naturalist*, and quoted them sometimes to give Credit to his wretched Arguments; but fell unmercifully upon all the *Nazarene* Doctors, so that not one of them found quarter at his Hand.

So foolish a Supposition, for which this Monk was by way of Banter called, *Pere eternel des Petites Maisons*, *i. e.* The Eternal Father of the Mad-houses, was smartly taken to Pieces, and confuted by several learned Men, who reduced it to nothing *; yet it had its Adherents, so ridiculous as it was, and so contrary to good Sense and the Light of Nature. The Love of Singularity and Novelty, brought it into such Vogue with the *French*, and with Foreigners too, as lasted till the Delusion was dissipated, and Reason regained it's Ascendant.

A Man must be quite stupid to imagine that the Works of the *Greek* and *Latin* Authors, which are come down to us, were composed at St. *Denis* in a

* See particularly the *Vindiciæ veterum Scriptorum contra J. Harduinum*, by the celebrated M. *la Croze*, See also the *Miles Macedonicus* of the learned *Norris*. The Reasons which put Father *Hardouin* upon the Invention of this celebrated System, are very well explained in the fourth Letter of the *Secret Memoirs of the Republic of Letters*; to which if the Reader will please to turn his Eye, he will supply the Want of what could not find room in this Letter.

Convent

Convent of Monks; for it is there that this Impostor pretends that all Antiquity was forged. But I demand, how it was possible that the *Greeks*, who successively possessed the MSS. of their Authors in their Libraries, could agree to burn, or tear them to pieces, and to admit others that were forged in their Names in this Monastery? Though *Xenophon*, *Homer*, *Pindar*, *Sophocles*, *Euripides Diodorus* of *Sicily*, *&c.* had been wrote over again, how could they find their Way into the Libraries of the *Greeks*, which were at that Time only full of those Authors? How could the counterfeit ones be taken in change for the true ones? But perhaps it will be said, that there was no Book in *Greece*, and that the *Greeks* could neither read nor write some time after *Constantine*: And the Foundation of this Hypothesis cannot be supported, but by advancing this impertinent Absurdity; for if it be allowed that the *Greeks* had Eyes, and could both read and write, by consulting the last Authors who have wrote of our Times, and tracing them successively back to those who are the most ancient, we shall find they have all quoted one another, and reported Passages out of those that have gone before. The Authors of the fourteenth Century have quoted those of the thirteenth; those of the thirteenth have quoted their Predecessors of the twelth and eleventh Centuries; and by thus always going higher up, we come easily to the Source of the Originals rejected. At what Time was there any Appearance observed of the Forgery of the ancient Authors? How can it be imagined that the *Greeks* were so complaisant as to receive for authentic, Writings which they saw sprung up in one Night like Mushrooms, and of whose Authors they had no Knowledge? I demand what they would have said when they saw Works come

come out all of a ſudden, of which they could never have had the leaſt Notion. Is it likely that all Men by common Conſent, would have given implicit Credit to thoſe Writings, and not one of them have declared the ſame Diffidence as the Fryar *Hardouin*? Surely there would have been Ground for it; and if it ſhould be ſaid now, that the *Medea* of *Ovid*, and the *Thyeſtes* of *Varius* are recovered, which indeed may poſſibly happen, how thoroughly would thoſe Pieces be examined, how many Men would write *pro* or *con*, either to prove them genuine, or to explode them? Of this Fact the Works of *Petronius* are an evident Proof.

They who maintain that ridiculous Hypotheſis, which tends to render the precious Remains of Antiquity ſuſpicious, rely very much upon the Ignorance of the Times when thoſe Authors were counterfeited. But conſider, dear *Brito*, how one abſurd Argument neceſſarily brings with it another. How fooliſh, or rather how ſtupid is it to think that the Works of *Demoſthenes*, *Quintilian*, *Virgil*, *Horace*, *Perſius*, *&c.* are the Productions of an Age drowned in Ignorance *? What! can Stupidity and groſs Ignorance

* This Paſſage wants to be more clearly explained: For among the few Works which Father *Hardouin* looks upon as really ancient, he numbers the Satires and the Epiſtles of *Horace*, and the Georgics of *Virgil*; but he rejects all *Horace*'s Odes, and *Virgil*'s Æneid. He had diſcovered, as he ſays, that ſome Ages ago, I know not how many, ſeveral Perſons united and undertook to compoſe the ancient Hiſtory, which was entirely loſt. He is exactly informed of the Age in which thoſe People lived, as well as of the Place where they compoſed their Works. For all their Monuments of Antiquity were only *Cicero*, *Pliny*, the Georgics of *Virgil*, the Satires, and the Epiſtles of *Horace*. He thinks that we had no other

Ignorance produce that which the profoundest Learning and the most painful Study are scarce able to imitate? The eminent Historians of this Age have the same Respect for *Titus Livy*, as *Statius* had for the Æneid, which he in a manner adored *.

Do but consider, dear *Brito*, who are the Men that they Name for the Authors of Works, whose Gallantry and Delicacy are still Patterns for the nicest Courtiers of this Age. They are Monks that are said to have composed the *Heroides*, and *Ovid*'s *Art of Love*, and Dunces that are the Inventors of *Demosthenes*'s *Phillippics*, and the Works of *Plutarch*. But some of these Coxcombs, in the *Republic of Letters*, tell us, that the Men who composed those Works, had Wit; but they who bought and received them, were Fools. I demand if it was possible that Genius should be confined only to seven or eight Persons shut up in one House? And if it be answered, That all the Reason and Wisdom

other Monuments of Antiquity but those, except some Fasti, and a very few Inscriptions. *Deprehendit ille—— Cætum certorum Hominum ante sæcula nescio quot extitisse, qui Historiæ veteris concinnandæ Partes suscepissent, qualem nunc habemus, cum nulla tunc extaret. Sibi probè notam illorum Ætatem, atque Officinam esse, inque eam Rem istis Subsidio fuisse* Tullium, Plinium, Moronis Georgica, Flacci *Sermones & Epistolas; nam hæc illa sola censet —— ex omni Latinitate sincera Monumenta, præter* Inscriptiones *admodum paucas*, Fastosque *nonnullos*. Harduini Chronologia ex Nummis antiquis restituta. Prolus. pag. 60.

* ——— Nec tu divinam Æneïda tenta,
Sed longè sequere, & Vestigia semper adora.
Stat. Thebaid.

'The Æneid shines in too Divine a Sphere,
'Trace it with Awe, and ever it revere.'

of

of Mankind were not confined to one single Monastery, it must be owned that other learned Men dispersed in the several Parts of *Europe*, and who there composed the Works that we have at this Day, would have made some mention of those Forgers of the ancient Writings.

Really, dear *Brito*, every Man who maintains the System of this Fryar *Hardouin*, must take his Choice either to pass for a Fool, or a Fanatic; and it is shewing them too much Indulgence, to go about to confute such a Heap of Absurdities. One Reason why the Enemies of the ancient Authors suspect the Works of *Virgil* to be of doubtful Authority, is this; *Pliny* the Naturalist, say they, speaks of a *Virgil*, Author of the *Bucolics*, but does not mention one Word of the *Æneid*; therefore the *Æneid* which we have, is not by the same *Virgil* as the *Bucolics*. I cannot help smiling, dear *Brito*, while I acquaint thee of this absurd Argument: I should think it might be as well said thirty or forty Years hence, that the Psalms were not translated into *French* Verse by *Marot*, because *Boileau*, who mentions the Works of that Poet, does not say a Word of that Version. What would the World think of a Man, who two or three hundred Years hence should attempt to prove, that the Tragedy of *Bajazet* was not written by *Racine*, though by the way, it is one of that Author's best Pieces, becaue his Friend *Despereaux* spoke of all that Poet's other Plays, but never made mention of that?

Undoubtedly, dear *Brito*, thou wilt be at a Loss to guess at the Reasons which determined this Monk to maintain so surprising an Hypothesis. I was as much to seek for them as thee, till some learned Men of this Country discovered the Mystery of the whole Affair to me, together with the secret Springs

Springs by which this brain-sick Impostor was actuated. He was a Member of a Society * that was at utter Enmity with another †, which has published several Editions of the *Greek* and *Latin Nazarene* Doctors. These Books having been received by the Public with universal Applause, stirred up the Jealousy and Envy of *Hardouin*'s Brethren. To defeat the Authority of these Editions, he was resolved to cancel the Antiquity of those Authors; and the better to reconcile the *Nazarenes* to his Sentiment, who might justly have been disgusted at the Contempt shewn for their ancient Doctors, this Monk thought to extenuate the Crime of his System, by giving all the ancient Authors in general a later Date, and insinuating that they were for the most Part written by the Monks who were the Predecessors of those who now plead for their Antiquity.

That, dear *Brito*, was the Cause of the ridiculous Opinion started in these latter Days against the most celebrated Writers, and embraced by some Novices who thought to make short Work with Wit, and to give themselves a Reputation by applauding such Impertinances.

I should be glad if I had some News to impart to thee; but for some Days past *Paris* seems to be pretty quiet. However, it's present Tranquility is not like to continue long; and the inconstant Humour of the *French* would soon supply me with a thousand new Amusements for the Subjects of my Letters, if I did not intend to leave this Country forthwith. I shall shortly set out for *Flanders*,

* That of the *Jesuits*.

† The Congregation of St. *Maur*.

to

to make an End of ſome Affair which I have at *Bruſſels*; and from thence I ſhall not fail to write to thee.

Fare thee well, dear *Brito*, and may the God of our Fathers abundantly proſper thee.

End of the SECOND VOLUME.

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